OCTOBER 1961

Commentary

WESTERN VALUES AND TOTAL WAR

A Round-Table Discussion

Sidney Hook
H. Stuart Hughes
Hans J. Morgenthau
C. P. Snow

MARTIN BUBER'S HASIDISM
Gershom Scholem

"ALL THAT CELLAR–DEEP JAZZ"
Henry Miller and Seymour Krim
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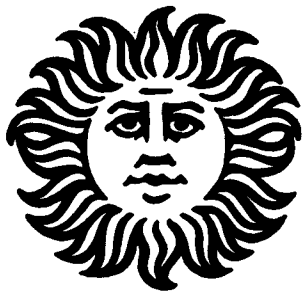

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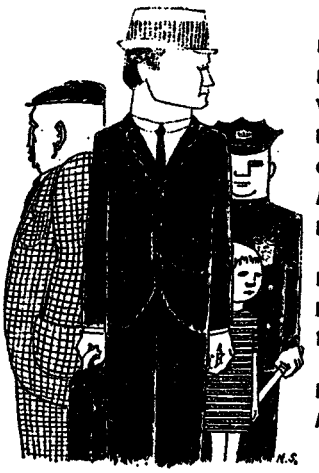

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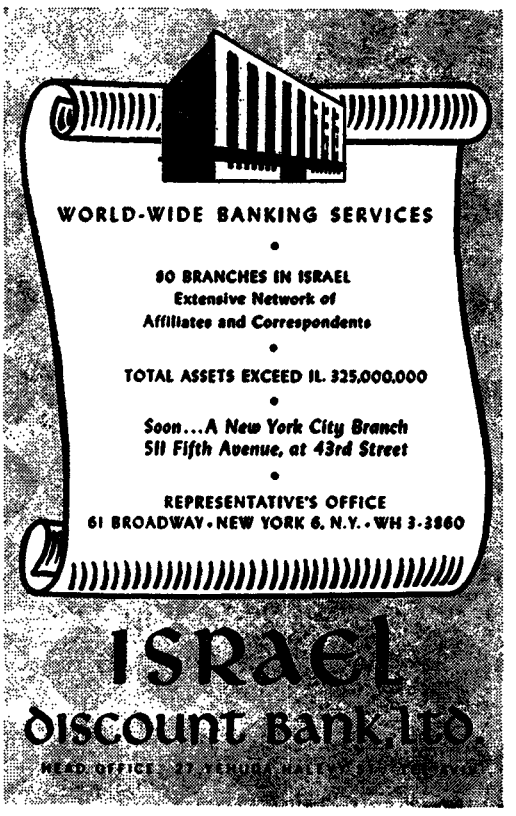
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WESTERN VALUES AND TOTAL WAR

SIDNEY HOOK

H. STUART HUGHES

HANS J. MORGENTHAU

C. P. SNOW

Last May, in observance of its fifteenth anniversary year, COMMENTARY *invited* SIDNEY HOOK, H. STUART HUGHES, HANS J. MORGENTHAU, *and* C. P. SNOW *to participate in a three-hour round-table discussion of the moral and political questions surrounding the possibility of a nuclear war. The discussion, held before a selected audience of writers, editors, clergymen, and educators at the Institute of Human Relations and moderated by* NORMAN PODHORETZ, *editor of* COMMENTARY, *was wholly spontaneous. What follows is a slightly abridged transcript of the entire proceedings.*

SIDNEY HOOK *is chairman of the department of philosophy at New York University and the author, among many other books, of* From Marx to Hegel *and* The Quest for Being. H. STUART HUGHES, *professor of history at Harvard, is the author of* Consciousness and Society *and* Contemporary Europe. HANS J. MORGENTHAU, *who now conducts the bi-monthly department "Public Affairs" for us, is director of the Center for the Study of American Foreign Policy at the University of Chicago.* C. P. SNOW,* *whose novel sequence* Strangers and Brothers *is now nearing completion, is also the author of the widely-discussed essay* The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution.

Norman Podhoretz: The problem we've selected for discussion this afternoon is a very, very broad one, "Western Values and Total War," but we're going to try to focus on several slightly narrower themes, the main one being the question of whether or not, in a situation that threatens thermonuclear war, there is an inherent contradiction between the job of preserving and extending the liberal democratic heritage and the job of protecting the national interests of the various countries in the Western bloc who presumably represent that tradition.

There have been, crudely speaking, two schools of thought on the question of the nature of thermonuclear war, and most political positions follow ultimately from one or the other of these two sets of assumptions. The first school of thought—which is represented perhaps most prominently by Herman Kahn and certain members of the RAND Corporation—believes that the possibility of thermonuclear war has changed nothing in kind but merely in degree. In other words, this school of thought is willing to contemplate the use of nuclear weapons and to calculate the point at which a civilization might rebuild itself after a thermonuclear war.

The other school of thought—which has been represented recently by Karl Jaspers—begins with the assumption that

* Sir Charles arrived late and did not take part in the opening stages of the discussion.

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thermonuclear war is different in kind, not merely in degree, from all other forms of violence and armed conflict between nations. This school of thought believes that one cannot speak of preserving civilization, freedom, or values by resort to nuclear warfare, and therefore would consider that nuclear warfare must be ruled out as an instrument of national policy. I think spokesmen for this school might argue that we can conceive of preserving a nation *physically* even after a thermonuclear war, but that it is absurd to speak of preserving values—moral values, political values—and certainly impossible to speak of preserving a civilization like our own. I wonder, Professor Hook, whether you would begin by commenting on this opposition that I've rather crudely described.

Sidney Hook: The situation that Mr. Podhoretz has laid out for us is even more complex and difficult. I do not know how great the destruction will be in the event of war. I don't think anybody knows because so many contingencies are involved. We can grant that in any case the upshot will be horrible. The main question to me in this context is the moral one—what price are we prepared to pay for the preservation of freedom in a world in which such things may happen? However, when we discuss this question, we must bear in mind the following: On the eve of the Second World War it was widely predicted that a world war would lead to the end of all civilization because of the use of poison gas. And for all I know, there existed at the time well-grounded possibilities that the use of gas would make human life impossible on this planet with as much or even more plausibility, in a technical sense, than the use of thermonuclear weapons. Despite these predictions, two things happened. Those who felt that the values of the West were worth preserving against the onslaught of fascism took the risk of war, despite the fact that they weren't sure that gas warfare wouldn't bring an end to mankind. And secondly, to the surprise of many, gas warfare was not used. Hitler was a madman; yet this madman realized that if he used gas he would provoke reprisals which would mean the end of the national existence of Germany. From this, I draw the following conclusion: If we surrender the deterrent—which is widely recommended by many—we invite the conquest of the world by Communist totalitarianism. And no matter how we define Western values, they are certainly incompatible with that system of organized terror. If we hold on to the deterrent, then, since Khrushchev is not a madman and does not want a war which would mean the end of Soviet existence, and since the Communists make a fetish of history—survival is the be-all and end-all for them—it might be possible, by preserving peace through the retention of the deterrent weapon, to work out a multilateral form of controlled disarmament, thus permitting the nations of this world to make their own decisions concerning the kind of life they wish to live.

I conclude this introductory statement with a reminder about our theme. I had hoped that we would begin with a discussion of the nature of Western values. As I read the history of Western culture it seems to me that survival at all costs is not among the values of the West. It was Aristotle who said that it is not life as such, or under any conditions, that is of value, but the good life. The free man is one who in certain situations refuses to accept life if it means spiritual degradation. The man who declares that survival at all costs is the end of existence is morally dead, because he's prepared to sacrifice all other values which give life its meaning. But our alternatives today are not limited to surrender to Communism or universal destruction by war. We can count upon the sanity of the men in the Kremlin—they're very sane and realistic. If we do not abandon our deterrent weapons, I believe that in time we can work out an alternative which will avoid the extremes described by our chairman.

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Podhoretz: Mr. Hughes, you are one of the many people Mr. Hook was referring to who have advocated the abandonment of the deterrent as an instrument of national policy, and I know that you have a rather different view of the alternatives before us. So perhaps you'd care to comment on the statement just made.

H. Stuart Hughes: Yes, one thing I'd like to say at the start is that I'm not a pacifist, but as a historian I find very few wars worth fighting. I would almost limit those worth fighting to the Second World War. I would definitely not include the American Revolution, the American Civil War, or the First World War. You may say that I include the one war I fought in, but that's just how it happened. My position would be a non-pacifist one, but one extremely skeptical of wars in any case, and totally skeptical of wars of mass destruction. Where I differ from some of my friends is in feeling that the great change came not with the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, but in 1943, when we began the terror bombardment of Germany. There's where I think the character of war changed and the use of weapons of mass destruction began.

Now, I think here one should apply a type of reasoning such as the theologians have always used. Presumably any war worth fighting—e.g., the Second World War—is in theological and moral terms a just war. I would argue to this day that the Second World War was a just war. But if I understand the theologians correctly, a war can only be considered just if the means are proportionate to the evil to be eradicated. Now it seems to me the means used against Hitler were proportionate until the terror bombing; and you did not need the terror bombing to win that war. It was both morally and technically stupid and wrong. I cannot see any way of fighting Communism by general war in which the means would be proportionate to the evil. I happen to think that Communism has a great deal of evil in it, but less than Nazism had. On this basis, then, I throw out all comparisons with the 1930's and Munich. I know this is the classic argument and I think people who hold my position should be prepared for it. We sound like appeasers. Well, we accept that charge and say that the situation is different. Remember, appeasement was not originally an ugly word. It became such after 1938.

If I may go on a moment more—I hope disarmament will come up eventually, but I want to leave that out for the present—it seems, then, we have to face the old "Red or Dead?" question, as Bertrand Russell and others express it in England. Which do you want, to be red or dead? To speak very crudely, I'm on the red side of this, and I gather Mr. Hook is on the dead side. But let me just suggest in this connection that people who hold my views do not think that they are inviting Soviet conquest and do not believe in surrender. We believe that the enemy should be met with real force, but real force on a human scale which would give men the old alternative of making a personal choice as to whether they wanted to die. If the Communists were to invade, I would like to take up a gun and fight. But that would be my personal choice. It wouldn't involve all sorts of neutrals, the animal world, unborn generations, etc. So, my point of view is: yes, we should be prepared to fight and to fight hard—but with conventional weapons, by guerilla warfare, militia-type organizations, passive resistance, underground activity. And the most important task for this country is to begin to study these methods. I went just a month ago to the international congress in Milan on the history of resistance organizations during the Second World War, and I regard this as a most important type of study—to find out how you resist as human beings without weapons of mass destruction. I say these things to distinguish my position from a doctrinaire pacifist position or from a position of simply saying, "Let us let the red hordes wash over us."

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Podhoretz: Mr. Morgenthau, would you rather be red or dead, or neither? Is there a way of escaping this gruesome alternative?

Hans J. Morgenthau: I certainly would rather be neither, if I have a choice. I don't want to address myself at the moment to the grim question as to whether or not to surrender the nuclear deterrent. But I want rather to discuss the fundamental philosophic question—whether it is possible to defend the values of Western civilization by nuclear war. I'm indeed inclined to answer this question in the negative, while admitting the possibility, or even perhaps the likelihood, that we will have to fight a nuclear war. This likelihood is the measure of the dilemma we are facing and of the political and moral bankruptcy we are suffering because of our inability to devise a third alternative to those which have been mentioned—both of which are to me equally unacceptable.

I think a revolution has occurred, perhaps the first true revolution in foreign policy since the beginning of history, through the introduction of nuclear weapons into the arsenal of warfare. For from the beginning of history to the end of the Second World War, there existed a rational relationship between violence as a means of foreign policy, and the ends of foreign policy. That is to say, a statesman could ask himself—and always did ask himself—whether he could achieve what he sought for his nation by peaceful diplomatic means or whether he had to resort to war. A statesman, up to the beginning of the nuclear age, was very much in the position of a labor leader who asks himself, "Can I get what I want by the peaceful means of collective bargaining or do I have to resort to industrial warfare in the form of a strike?" To use another metaphor, the statesman in the pre-nuclear age was very much in the position of a gambler—a reasonable gambler, that is—who is willing to risk a certain fraction of his material and human resources. If he wins, his risk is justified by victory; if he loses, he has not lost everything. His losses, in other words, are bearable. This rational relationship between violence as a means of foreign policy and the ends of foreign policy has been destroyed by the possibility of all-out nuclear war.

I cannot accept the analogy with gas warfare. Before the outbreak of the Second World War, the possibility of gas warfare was infinitely more marginal than is the possibility of nuclear war today. Certainly, the United States today must rely primarily on the nuclear deterrent in defense of its national interest; and when the chips are down, it will be faced with either retreat or resort to nuclear war. No such simple, stark alternative existed before the Second World War with regard to either retreat or gas warfare. Gas warfare was one weapon among many from which nations could choose. Furthermore, it was not a rational deduction but practical considerations which made gas warfare appear inadvisable to Hitler. In the period of the *Blitzkrieg,* gas warfare was unnecessary because the German armies overran their neighbors on all sides, and afterward the initiation of gas warfare would have been suicidal for Germany. The question hardly arose for the Allies because they were engaged in a war of movement and therefore resort to gas warfare was also senseless for them. Furthermore, because they were so engaged, they would have had to kill not only the German armies but the populations of the occupied nations as well. So there is, I think, quite a difference between the fact that all belligerents refrained from gas warfare in the Second World War and the possibility, if not the likelihood, of nuclear war in the future.

However, the fundamental question is, in view of this disproportion between the means of violence and the ends of foreign policy, whether it is still possible today to defend the values of any civilization by resort to nuclear warfare. For if you assume—as even the most optimistic an-

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alysts such as Herman Kahn have assumed—that in a third world war fought with nuclear weapons, fifty, eighty, or a hundred million Americans would die, and nine-tenths, let me say, of the economic capacity of the United States would be destroyed, you must be possessed not only by an extreme optimism but by an almost unthinking faith to believe that civilization, any civilization, Western or otherwise, could survive such an unprecedented catastrophe. For the fundamental error in the reasoning to which I'm referring, it seems to me, lies in the assumption that the moral fiber of a civilization has an unlimited capacity to recover from shock. I would rather assume from individual personal experience as well as from the experience of history that there is a breaking point for a civilization, as there is a breaking point for an individual man. For, after all, when we speak of civilization we are speaking of an abstraction; we are really speaking of man in the mass, of Americans in the mass. Would Americans in the mass be able to hold to the values of Western civilization in the face of such an unimaginable, unprecedented catastrophe?

We are of course all guessing here, but I would dare to make the guess that Western civilization would not survive such a catastrophe. If this estimate is correct, then obviously an all-out nuclear war in defense of Western civilization is a contradiction in terms, an absurdity. I must say that this absurdity may occur, but if it should occur, I would still say that it was an absurdity.

Hook: I think that both of my colleagues have been inconsistent.

Podhoretz: With each other, or each with himself?

Hook: Not with each other, but with themselves. Mr. Hughes maintains that he'd rather be red than dead, and then tells us that of course he's prepared to die fighting against Communism. And he talks about means of underground warfare against totalitarianism without any regard for the great qualitative difference which totalitarianism makes where opposition is concerned. There is no underground in the Soviet Union, Mr. Hughes—you probably learned that at the congress you attended. One of the reasons there is no underground in the Soviet Union is that the Kremlin organizes its own opposition in order to destroy it. And this introduces a qualitative change of enormous magnitude.

But I want to go back for a moment to a very interesting thing Mr. Hughes said about mass bombing, which for him represented the great turning-point in history. He asserted that the use of weapons must be proportionate to the end. He deplored the mass bombings of Germany which, of course, the English did not initiate—Coventry preceded the mass bombings of Germany—and condemned them on the ground that they were strategically and militarily unnecessary. Some people with excellent hindsight have criticized the use of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima on similar grounds. I frankly don't know whether these criticisms are justified by military and strategic considerations or not, but my question to Mr. Hughes is this: suppose the only way in which the West could have prevented the world victory of Hitler was by this mass bombing of Germany? Would you have been in favor of it or not? Mankind paid the price of forty million dead to get rid of Hitler. It sounds macabre to make comparisons and weigh lives against values, but it seems clear that Mr. Hughes, who justifies the Second World War, thinks that forty million dead was not too high a price to pay for a free civilization. My contention is that both of my colleagues have overlooked the disproportion between the two alternatives of surrender and willingness to resist. Professor Morgenthau said that we might soon be confronted by a choice between the preservation of the United States—that is, the preservation of our freedoms—

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and the use of a nuclear deterrent. He didn't clearly indicate what his position would be if that were our choice. There was some intimation that he believed, if that were really our choice, we should have to surrender. . . .

Morgenthau: That is not what I meant to say.

Hook: I'm glad I misunderstood you on that point. But if we decide against surrender, then the question is: how can we best preserve ourselves? You face the same problem as Mr. Hughes. If conventional weapons won't prevent Khrushchev from taking the world, and if the only thing that can prevent him is the nuclear deterrent, should we use it or surrender? I don't see how we can avoid that point.

The main thing I want to stress, however, is that it is a mistake to make an easy equation of the alternatives between surrender on the one hand and resistance and the cost of resistance on the other. For if we are prepared to take the risk of fighting for freedom, then we must prepare ourselves in such a way that the costs are diminished. Here we're dealing with speculative notions. The one thing we can be sure about is that if we surrender, Communism, with all its evils, will take over the world. But if we are prepared to fight, then we may not have to fight, for the reasons which I have indicated; and if the enemy is foolish enough to attack us—which I don't believe for a minute he will do if we keep the deterrent—then, if we are prepared, the losses may not be as great as some anticipate. There are questions involved here whose answers are indeterminate. I challenge the accepted notion that all life necessarily must be impossible by virtue of any kind of nuclear combat independently of what we do. After all, Germany seemed finished at the end of the Second World War.

I would like my colleagues to address themselves to the question: whether when the chips are down they are prepared to sacrifice the integrity and existence of the free world to Communism? And further, whether they have done justice to two considerations: first, that our willingness to fight for our freedom may be the best way of preserving it, just as sometimes in personal life one's willingness to lose one's life may be the best way of defending his life; second, that for the Communist world nothing exists but history. Survival, I repeat, is the *summum bonum* for Communism, whereas the West, buttressed in part by belief in immortality, whether as a myth or fact, has always maintained that there are certain values which are more important than life itself. To the Communist world there is nothing worse than defeat. That is why Lenin always emphasized the importance of what he called the policy of strategic retreat, and its correlative maxim: avoid provocations! That is why the Communists will never start a war which they have reason to fear they will not survive. Consequently, in the light of all this, I say to Mr. Hughes that his position invites the Communists to take over the world. And when they do so, he has no guarantee even then of survival. He does not know whether or not the Chinese will use atomic weapons against the Russians. He may end up both red and dead.

Podhoretz: Mr. Hughes, would you agree that the renunciation of the deterrent would automatically, or even probably, result in a Communist take-over?

Hughes: I'd like to answer one thing before I answer that. For I do want to clear up this casualties-and-Second-World-War question. The question is: if the bombing had been necessary to winning the war, would it still have been right? I find this hard to argue because I think the mass bombing was such a cruel mistake even in the most hard-boiled military terms. As a staff officer during the war I spent a good deal of time arguing against it. But let us say if you balanced it against the destruction of six million in the extermination camps, I suppose if you had

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to do the arithmetic, you'd come out and say—all right, it would still fall within the just war category. So I think I could give a qualified agreement on that.

As far as comparing the forty million dead during the Second World War with forty million dead in a thermonuclear war, this seems to me an unrealistic comparison. The holocaust of a day or two, and the particularly awful method of death, should not be balanced against the death of an equal number in regular warfare. And the figure of forty million—which, incidentally, is the lowest estimate that has been made—should not be balanced against deaths that happened over a six-year period in a very widely extended territory, most of them in the countryside rather than in the cities, at least as many by starvation and hardship as by violent death, at least half of them in the Soviet Union itself. Nothing, then, in our Western or even German experience would be remotely comparable to the contemplated forty million dead in a short thermonuclear war. Now, to get to the main question that the chairman wanted me to answer. I would say we would only be honest in answering that Soviet take-over in certain areas might be invited. . . .

Podhoretz: *Might* be invited by unilateral disarmament?

Hughes: By some sort of unilateral renunciation of thermonuclear deterrence. I dislike the term unilateral disarmament without qualification because it sounds as though one is going to strip down to one's underwear shorts tomorrow, and that is not it. It would be a question of starting a movement in this direction. Renouncing deterrence as an instrument of foreign policy might, I think, invite or at least facilitate Soviet penetration of certain areas, particularly in the underdeveloped world, but these areas are largely indefensible anyway.

Podhoretz: What about Western Europe, Berlin?

Hughes: No, I do not think so. I think in Europe deterrence has not deterred anything. Let's leave out Khrushchev as more rational, perhaps more humane, than Stalin, and get back to Stalin before 1953. What deterred Stalin from taking over Western and Central Europe? I would argue it was not our monopoly of atomic weapons, but the conviction that these would be very hard countries to rule. He was having enough trouble already.

Hook: Excuse me, Mr. Hughes. We have some evidence on this, *viz.*, the exchange of letters between Tito and Stalin. Tito was willing and eager to take Trieste, but Stalin warned him not to because he said he was not prepared to go to war against the West, for this would spell disaster. One doesn't have to agree with Churchill that the atomic bomb prevented the Russian troops from marching to the Atlantic, but it's quite clear that wherever the West stood firm the Russians retreated. When it stood firm in Berlin they retreated. When it stood firm in Greece they retreated. And this wasn't because it was difficult to rule these countries. After all, Stalin was able to rule Poland, he was able to rule other satellite regions of the Soviet empire. He had enough terror at his disposal. I think you must give us more evidence that it wasn't fear of war that prevented Stalin from moving West, because a *prima facie* case can be made out that it was.

Hughes: I think you have to make a distinction between areas occupied in the wake of Nazi conquest with the flow-back of the Nazi tide after the Second World War and areas occupied *de novo*. My own reading of history is that the Russians were frankly surprised at their lack of popularity in East-Central Europe. They may have been a little naive about this, but there is the fact of their permitting virtually free elections in Hungary, for example, in 1945—and then being enormously disappointed at the result. There is the famous incident of the Soviet Occu-

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pation Commander literally kicking the local Communist chief out of his office after the elections went bad, saying "What happened? What's the matter with you people?" I think there is massive evidence that with the revulsion against Nazism, the Russians thought that occupation would be an easier job than in fact it turned out to be. So I wouldn't draw any analogies from experience in East-Central Europe as to Soviet computations of the risks and difficulties in governing a newly-conquered territory belonging squarely within Western civilization.

Podhoretz: Well, I think there's probably too much evidence and not enough time to spell it out. The point of disagreement is clear. I wish, Mr. Hughes, you would just go on for another minute and sketch out for us your notion of what would happen in the event of a renunciation of deterrence by the West. You've already said that in certain underdeveloped countries the Communists would move in, but you implied or said that these countries would go Communist anyway. You are saying, then, that you don't think one ought to assume that the Russians would move into Berlin, for example, if we renounced thermonuclear deterrence? Do I understand you correctly?

Hughes: Exactly.

Podhoretz: Mr. Morgenthau, what is your reaction to all this? Do you believe, as a leading exponent of the school of *Realpolitik*—you have been called that, anyway. . . .

Morgenthau: I have been called lots of things.

Podhoretz: Well, that probably more often than other things. Anyhow, do you think it's plausible to assume that the Russians have been deterred by American strength in the past ten years?

Morgenthau: I have absolutely no doubt. I am convinced that the Russians were deterred from advancing. I don't believe for a moment that the Russians today are imposing upon themselves a certain self-restraint because they are afraid that Western countries may be difficult to digest. After all, if you consider that since the end of the Second World War, in election after election, one out of every four Italians has voted the Communist ticket, it shouldn't have been very difficult for the Communists to digest Italy. In 1946 or 1947 it would have been relatively easy for the Russians, short of American deterrence through the threat of atomic war, to take over Italy and other such countries, not necessarily by sending the Red Army in but by letting the best organized and largest political group within those countries do the job.

Podhoretz: Mr. Morgenthau, what then is your own position? I think that Mr. Hook was asking a few minutes ago what choice you would make.

Morgenthau: I would fully agree with Mr. Hook that I would not surrender. I would rather fight if I'm forced to fight a nuclear war. But I would be fully convinced of the utter absurdity, of the utterly suicidal character of such a war. It would be an absolutely senseless war, but it would be imposed upon us because it would be one of the two alternatives which not only Western statesmanship but the statesmanship of the world would have left to us.

Hook: If I understand you, then, Mr. Morgenthau, you're prepared to be heroic even if foolish. I maintain (though I don't like to use these phrases) that if we're prepared to be heroic, we will not have to be foolish.

Morgenthau: Let me say a word about heroism. I believe the advent of nuclear power has also changed the character of heroism. I don't believe that it is appropriate to quote Aristotle in this context, because when Aristotle speaks of the value of life as over against the value

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of the good life, he does not contemplate —nor could he have contemplated—the mass extermination of large segments of a civilized population. He had in mind individual acts of heroism—Leonidas being slain at Thermopylae and Socrates drinking the hemlock. Those are deaths which carry a meaning. They are deaths which were worth dying, as it were, but the extermination of eight million New Yorkers within a fraction of a second is an entirely different type of thing. I see no meaning in the reduction of tens of millions of people to atomic dust, of the monuments of a civilization to radioactive rubble. I see no meaning at all, I see no heroism at all in this.

Hook: Then why do you want to resist it?

Hughes: I think Mr. Hook is logical and I think I'm logical, although we disagree; but I do not see your point about fighting a senseless war. If it is senseless, then why fight it?

Morgenthau: The other alternative is also senseless, but perhaps somewhat more. I'm not trying to be facetious.

Podhoretz: Mr. Morgenthau, I think we'd all like to know what the sensible alternative might be. You spoke earlier of diplomatic means of conducting conflict between nations. Now the only diplomatic means we've heard about this afternoon so far are in the nature of military policy. Are there other diplomatic means that might get us out of this awful dilemma?

Morgenthau: The way out of the dilemma is to transcend the two equally unacceptable alternatives of surrender or fighting a suicidal atomic war, and that means taking nuclear power out of the arsenal of individual nations altogether.

Hughes: By multilateral disarmament.

Morgenthau: Not necessarily by multilateral disarmament, but some kind of supra-national agency which we may call world government, because this is what it would be.

Hook: We do not disagree about that. My main point was that it is a mistake to conceive of our situation as if it were limited to the two alternatives of surrender and world destruction. All I maintained, Mr. Chairman, was that if one were prepared when the chips are down to fight for freedom, one would thereby broaden the spectrum of possibilities. It would give us maneuverability. We could offer Khrushchev various peaceful modes of arbitrating our differences. We could continue to work through the UN and through renewed attempts at test controls. But once we abandon our deterrent, then I predict all of these other methods will surely fail. And if I may say so, I do not know any reasonable way by which one can choose between absurdities if one regards them as equally absurd. When Mr. Morgenthau says that surrender is more absurd than the readiness to fight, I interpret him to mean that it is *more sensible* to be prepared to fight than to surrender. I would also like to point out that in terms of the Western tradition, the view that it is not life but the good life which is the highest ideal—the essence of the liberal outlook—was not restricted merely to cases of individual heroism. Total war was also waged in the past. Let us stretch our imaginations a little. Imagine that we are living in Carthage, and the Romans are at the gates. Carthage fought a total war. So did Judea. Many illustrations can be cited of cities and entire settlements which went down to destruction fighting for what they thought was the good life, even when they had no assurance that their action would serve as a beacon to inspire the rest of mankind. The history of the Jewish people especially illustrates this. I am sometimes inclined to admire Josephus because he seemed so sensible. But I admire more those who fought against Roman despotism, who fought for the integrity of

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their belief, refused to bow down to the Roman Emperor, and suffered the destruction of their community in consequence.

If we surrender our values, we open the floodgates for totalitarianism to sweep through the world. That we can make certain distinctions between Communism and Nazism is irrelevant where the main issue is concerned. The Nazis incinerated six million Jews; the Communists destroyed even more millions—and I'm not thinking now of Jews or non-Jews or of the differences in the method of slaughter. We must never lose sight of the ethical issue. In the end, each one makes his own decisions on these matters.

But I would like to bring back our discussion from the abstract, ethical question to the question of political strategy. I ask Mr. Morgenthau, who is an expert—and deservedly so—on foreign policy, whether he does not think that we increase our maneuverability in trying to work out a genuine type of peaceful coexistence by remaining armed with the deterrent.

Morgenthau: I would certainly agree that the prospects of this kind of policy in the long run are likely to be self-destructive. It is exactly because we have not developed any other means of settling our disputes peacefully, which is the great issue of our times, that we are forced to alternate between those two equally unacceptable alternatives.

Podhoretz: Mr. Morgenthau, it's recently been suggested—I think by Professor Seymour Melman of Columbia—that Western reluctance to contemplate the abandonment of deterrence as a strategy is based on the fear, the conviction, that in *political* warfare, even under the best conditions, the Communists would win. Mr. Melman was saying that we have not imagined how to compete politically and economically with the Communists and therefore we are forced continually to waver between these two grim alternatives. I'd like to hear some comments on that rather provocative statement.

Morgenthau: This is not, I think, so terribly provocative. It states an obvious fact.

Hook: I would disagree that it states an obvious fact. I think it's a very problematic assertion. In fact, in certain areas of the world it's false. I do not think that the free world need fear political warfare with the Soviet Union if it's restricted to political warfare. If the peoples of Europe were given the choice, or even if the peoples of the Soviet Empire were given the choice, I have no doubt as to what their choice would be. If the Iron Curtains of this world were lifted, in what direction would the movement of peoples flow? In the Soviet Union it's a crime, punishable by death, to try to leave the country. We haven't reached that yet.

Podhoretz: Excuse me, Mr. Hook—I think you've slightly diverted the point, which is perhaps why you were provoked. What Mr. Melman was getting at, I believe, is what is sometimes called the competition for the uncommitted nations. He probably was thinking of places like Latin America, in particular Cuba and other such countries, which seem to be attracted to the Communist bloc in one way or another in trying to carry out a social revolution. And he was further suggesting—and this I'd like to hear Mr. Hughes talk about for a moment—that American foreign policy has not in general backed such social revolutions on the ground that they would produce situations that were not reliably anti-Communist.

Hook: Mr. Podhoretz, before Mr. Hughes answers the question, perhaps you would make a little clearer what the question is. You are not saying, I assume, that countries, even in the uncommitted portions of the world, when given freedom of choice, have shown a natural inclination to join the Communist bloc. I'm aware of no underdeveloped country which when given freedom of choice through

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elections has ever decided to install a national Communist regime.

As a socialist, I certainly agree that our American policy has been bad in many of these countries. . . .

Podhoretz: Well, that's one answer to the question I raised. Mr. Hughes, would you agree with that?

Hughes: I'm delighted to find myself in agreement with Mr. Hook on one thing. I also regard myself as a socialist, and I think our view of the good society is almost identical.

Hook: No, I'm afraid not.

Hughes: We both believe in a democratic socialist society.

Hook: No, you are prepared to surrender the world to the Communists.

Hughes: But that is not a definition of a good society, and I would say that I was not prepared to surrender the world.

Hook: That is the implication of your position today.

Hughes: I feel slightly deflated. I was trying to agree.

Morgenthau: You can't get away with it.

Hook: Excuse me.

Hughes: I still think we agree. But I am surprised that Mr. Hook says, "Why discuss an abstract ethical question?" I thought that was the whole point, and I regard the central matter here as an abstract ethical question.

But let me go on to the question of our fearing political warfare. I think we do need to fear political warfare as long as we seem to represent in the world a status quo power. We need to be not only tolerant of social revolution but behind social revolution. And I believe—and here perhaps Mr. Hook agrees with me also—that it is not just because we fear social revolutions will go Communist that we are against them, but because we fear that they will be anti-capitalist. It seems to me that American foreign policy will make no sense to the uncommitted world until we say that we do not have a capitalist foreign policy, that we have no quarrel with collectivism or Communism as an economic system, that all we are interested in is human freedom. It seems to me this could have enormously simplified our attitude toward Cuba and a number of other places. So until American foreign policy and American society change profoundly, in having a far greater socialist tinge than they do today, I think we are going to be handicapped in peaceful political competition.

Hook: Mr. Hughes, let's be fair. As fellow socialists let us recognize the facts about American policy. I think it is demonstrably wrong to say that American policy has been motivated by a desire merely to preserve capitalism in countries which have been threatened by Communist and socialist movements.

Podhoretz: If I may interrupt you, Mr. Hook, I'd like to find out what the director of the Center for the Study of American Foreign Policy [Morgenthau] thinks about that.

Hook: Just let me have a few more sentences. I call attention not merely to the position taken by the American government in Mexico, I call attention especially to the attitude of the United States at the end of World War II. I should like Mr. Hughes to explain, on his view—and also have this clarified by Mr. Morgenthau—how it came about that when Britain was under a Labor socialist government, the United States cancelled its debt and gave substantial aid even against the opposition of conservatives in this country. When Europe was in danger of breakdown at the end of World War II, the United States offered the Marshall Plan, Mr. Hughes, to all the countries of Western Europe—including Communist countries like Poland and Yugoslavia. The

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reason it did that, it seems to me, is that it wanted to preserve the structure of freedom in Western Europe. And it wasn't motivated by simple capitalist considerations. Our attitude toward Yugoslavia, a socialist country, our attitude toward Poland—though it could be better—certainly invalidates the extreme statement that you made. That's why I cannot accept what you said as a fact, but as a rather problematic assertion.

Hughes: I know Mr. Morgenthau is waiting, but Mr. Hook misinterpreted me. I did not say American foreign policy was motivated by capitalist considerations. I simply said it was *limited* by them in its range of choice. Now it was one thing to accept a quasi-socialist *fait accompli* and say we would give it support—and that, furthermore, in a highly developed country where little threat seemed to be implied. (One must say, incidentally, that even in the British case, American sympathy for the Conservative party was well known.) But in places where we could throw our weight around, like certain German states before the formation of the Bonn government, the military government stepped right in. . . .

[C. P. Snow arrives]

Podhoretz: Sir Charles, at the moment we are trying to decide whether American foreign policy can be called capitalist in the sense of being limited by capitalist considerations.

Morgenthau: Not being a socialist, I look at this intra-socialist quarrel with complete impartiality and detachment. I don't believe it can really be denied that in the competition for the minds of men, especially in the emergent nations, the United States is at a considerable disadvantage. The issue is not that American foreign policy is capitalistic. It is rather that it is in a doctrinaire way anti-Communist and that it will support any movement and any government and elite which is vociferously anti-Communist, and the more vociferously it is anti-Communist the more certain is it going to be of American support. By the logic of this position, we have been supporting throughout the world the most reactionary, the most sterile, the most unviable elites, governments, and social systems.

The handicaps which the United States suffers in competing with the Soviet Union for the allegiance of the emergent nations is existential and cannot be removed by some kind of political device. After all, the Soviet Union can say, and says every day—and with a great deal of at least surface plausibility—that it was an underdeveloped nation forty years ago; that it was a backward, weak nation, and that it has developed into the other great industrial and military power of the world by virtue of the political, social, and economic system of Communism. So the Soviet Union says to the emergent nations, "If you want to develop as we have developed, accept our system, imitate us." And there can be no doubt of the enormous impact the actual economic and technological achievements of the Soviet Union have made upon the emergent nations. I think it was on the occasion of the Fourth of July celebration of 1956 that a Russian journalist wrote in a Russian newspaper that from the 18th century to this moment, the United States had been the model for other nations to emulate: that the United States had always assumed that its social and political experiment was created not for the sake of Americans alone, but for the sake of the world, and that the nations of the world had accepted this assumption. And now, this journalist said, the Soviet Union has taken the place of the U. S. Now it is the Soviet Union which gives an example to the rest of the world, which serves as a model to be emulated by other nations. I think this is a real challenge and this is a real problem, and whatever the voting might be in the Soviet Union if it were free, I think the facts of the situation point toward a real handicap which the U.S.

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suffers in the competition with the Soviet Union.

Podhoretz: Sir Charles, do you think that the Soviet Union has stolen American thunder as a model for emulation throughout the world?

C. P. Snow: I think there's no doubt of the fact at all. What Mr. Morgenthau said is undoubtedly true. It's part of the world situation at this moment, and quite clearly this country's got first to analyze that fact, and second to see in what respects it can be altered or softened. But of the fact there seems to me absolutely no doubt.

Hook: If I may draw on my own experience in Asia, I should say the picture is a little more complicated. As far as the opinion-makers in countries like Japan and India and Burma are concerned, it is true that they have been very much impressed, especially on the mainland of Asia, by Soviet economic progress. Interestingly enough, in Japan this isn't the case. The Japanese intellectuals told me, "We industrialized our country in forty-five or fifty years, from the time of the Mehji restoration in the 1860's to the turn of the century." In Japan, the Soviet Union is not the star of first magnitude in the firmament of the discontented. Oddly enough it's China. And not in terms of Chinese achievement but rather in terms, I think, of racial pride and sympathy. The Japanese don't really regard themselves as part of Asia. In the Asian countries—I can't speak about Africa, Sir Charles—I think that the dominant opinion is still (though tinctured with admiration of Soviet achievements) sympathetic toward the West. I have found the Indian intellectuals profoundly influenced by the values which the British bequeathed to India. I think England is the most popular country in India today. The Indians want both to improve their standard of living and retain the values of the West. The United States has helped India, although the Congress party is overwhelmingly socialistic. If India fails, Mr. Morgenthau's analysis would hold true. If in ten years from now the per capita income of India is no greater than it is today—which, despite all of our aid, might be the case unless the growth of population is restricted—then I think there would be a tendency to turn toward the Soviet Union and Communist China. But the whole situation of course has been aggravated by recent Chinese incursions into India. There is still a passion for freedom among the Indians, though its chief expression is for national freedom and national independence. I make these remarks not to take issue with Sir Charles, but to offer a more complete picture.

Snow: I would accept that qualification. Of course India is a very odd and special case for all sorts of reasons.

Hook: And Burma too.

Snow: Yes.

Podhoretz: I wonder if we might draw Sir Charles into one of the earlier themes of the afternoon's discussion. The major question that was raised earlier was whether it is possible for the West to preserve and extend the liberal-democratic heritage and still conceive of a thermonuclear war as a resort of policy. We've got the views of the other three gentlemen fairly clear. I wonder what yours would be on this, Sir Charles.

Snow: It's a very difficult one. Remember I speak here—though I know you and love you—with some special coloration. After all, I am English, and behind the thinking of all English people, irrespective of politics, there's bound to be the feeling that for us, if there is a thermonuclear war, the country is absolutely finished, not just mutilated grossly, as would be the case here and in the Soviet Union, but absolutely finished. You see, we're a supply base. We're not in the position of France and Germany,

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which probably would not be exposed to an extreme thermonuclear war because they would be conquerable by arms. But we should have to be, in the grizzly military phrase, masked, and masked under these circumstances means the complete elimination of the country. So that is at the back of all our attitudes. I don't think it need determine them completely, but there it is, and I think you Americans must take account of that when you find from all kinds of Englishmen much more reserve on this topic than you'd normally adopt.

Having said that, I find myself in something of a dilemma. I would have thought that any thermonuclear war, if it actually happened, would probably not leave much of the Western values behind. It's very difficult to see how it can. If there's going to be a catastrophe so great that it makes previous catastrophes insignificant, then it's hard to think that there would be anything much left in the way of democratic institutions. And I've never been able to see that there is a coherent military strategy for such a war. It seems to me that all the tough, sophisticated, complex thinking has very little relation to what is actually happening in fact. It seems to me to be the intellectual play of people who have not been concerned with military decisions, but are concerned with a kind of academic theory. And yet it's not easy to see how this country or the Soviet Union can get rid of nuclear weapons at once. I think we might hope that there will be a scaling down. That seems to be possible. It seems to me extremely important that this country should build up conventional weapons in a way that it has—very erroneously in my view—neglected to do since 1945. Both qualitatively and quantitatively this country is hopelessly behind the Soviet Union in that particular field. As to the constant use of this particular nuclear thinking not only as a threat but as a kind of support to society, my general inclination is that we probably have to damp that down or we're simply going to die on our feet.

Hook: I gather then, Sir Charles, that you are not urging a policy of unilateral disarmament on the part of the West.

Snow: No, I have never.

Hook: This mood of thinking in England which you describe, and with which I can sympathize, is shared very widely, by Macmillan as well as Gaitskell. On the basis of it, it's still possible to elaborate alternative policies.

Snow: Yes, oh yes. I don't think it's an all-or-nothing situation in that kind of way. There are really two different sets of conditions. One is, I think—coming down again to the sort of things military theorists talk about—that between this country and the Soviet Union at the moment there is a relatively stable balance which would not be affected either by the increase or the diminution of nuclear weapons on either side by quite a large factor. I would think that either country during the next decade is going to have enough material to do the other devastating harm.

Podhoretz: The so-called technological breakthrough that would put somebody far ahead is highly unlikely?

Snow: That's highly unlikely. In fact, if you've got the stuff and you've got any means of delivering it, then technological breakthroughs don't count. No, I don't believe in that. What I'm more worried about immediately is the rapid coming into possession of these weapons by large numbers of people. Because that seems to me to alter the dangers of accident, error, and so on quite out of proportion to the number of bombs. The number won't be very much greater, because the gross number of these weapons is so large in American and Russian hands that the six or eight powers that are going to possess them, or already possess them, won't alter them appreciably. But they do enormously alter the possibilities of some of these

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things going off, and I bet—in fact I've stated that I'm sure that they will go off, unless we can contain this dispersion. Whether their going off in a particular circumstance is going to start the whole holocaust, of course, is a matter partly of luck. It depends where the chance happened, in what circumstances it happened, in what hands these things were. The optimistic theory is that just as there is a fairly stable locking between this country and the Soviet Union, there will equally be lockings between, say, Israel and Egypt, and what not. That, I confess, I am far less confident about. Secondly, I would have thought that if this country and the Soviet Union go on regardless, increasing their armaments in this particular way, the position which may be stable now is bound to become unstable. I can't imagine an arms race of that type going on for very long without becoming unstable.

Hook: Unless there were countervailing considerations, I would agree with you. If one speaks in terms of a long-run building up of weapons, at some critical point it would lead to a denouement; but as Keynes said, in the long run we shall all be dead. But suppose we take into account the possibilities of modifying the trend. There are so many contingencies, as you pointed out, that enter the situation. They depend upon what we do to control tests, and limit the extension of the bomb with respect to the N+1 countries. But I've always been puzzled, to be perfectly frank with you, Sir Charles, about the theory of probability you were using in your speech before the AAAS [American Association of Atomic Scientists] when you predicted that there was almost a mathematical certainty that in ten years these things would go off.

Podhoretz: I think the term used was "statistical certainty," wasn't it, Sir Charles?

Snow: What I was actually prophesying —and I prophesy it here and now again —was that some of these things will go off. I didn't say that a thermonuclear war need break out, and that is why I was qualifying it here. It depends enormously on the particular way in which this accident happens. For instance, if by some unfortunate chance, a nuclear bomb went off in or over New York this afternoon, I wouldn't think that would give us much hope of avoiding the worst. We would have to show great prudence and wisdom for that sort of contingency not to bring about the thermonuclear war. And similarly, if by any chance one went off over Moscow, my expectations wouldn't be very cheerful. But I can imagine that somewhere in the remoter parts of Asia Minor, so to speak, one could go off, by accident or by some mad action, which wouldn't have decisive results. That, I think, needn't lead to a nuclear war.

Morgenthau: It's not only a matter of accidental nuclear war. Once nuclear weapons have been dispersed to an indefinite number of nations, the very mechanics of mutual deterrence as they exist today, stabilizing within certain limits the international situation, would disappear.

Snow: I agree.

Morgenthau: For if tomorrow an atomic bomb exploded in New York, everybody would know whose atomic bomb it was, and the retaliation would be swift and devastating. For this reason we don't need to worry about an atomic bomb going off tomorrow in New York.

Snow: Except by chance.

Morgenthau: Well, that possibility is extremely slim. We don't need to worry about that. But if you imagine for a moment, as we must, that within five or ten years ten nations have atomic weapons and tension exists between the United States and, let me say, two or three different nations, and an atomic bomb goes off in New York—against whom are you go-

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ing to retaliate? Are you going to blow up the whole world in order to make sure that the culprit doesn't escape? Furthermore, you will then have a new refinement of diplomacy, trying to make it appear that the atomic bomb originated from some country other than the one which actually dropped it. You will then have a very interesting new Machiavellian situation, which I suppose you will not survive for long. Before you came in, Sir Charles, I painted a rather glum picture of two different types of absurdity with which we are confronted. I think that the situation will not only be more difficult to handle in diplomatic and military terms but will also be intellectually and morally infinitely more grave than it is now, once the atomic club is wide open and an indefinite number of nations have joined.

Hook: How can we prevent the extension of nuclear weapons to the N+1 countries? Have you any ideas, Mr. Morgenthau, about procedures? In the next ten years if scientific knowledge is dispersed throughout the world, even if the Soviet Union and the United States were to renounce the use of thermonuclear weapons, what's to prevent some small nation from. . . .

Morgenthau: You are absolutely right. You see, this is really my main argument against unilateral nuclear disarmament. It may work in a bi-polar nuclear situation. But it is bound not to work when you have a multi-polar situation, when you have five or ten nations, because it doesn't do the United States any good to renounce for itself the use of atomic weapons, when the nine other nuclear powers don't renounce such use.

Hughes: It may be true that it is going to be too late even for a unilateral solution. This is the really nightmarish possibility. But it seems to me, Mr. Morgenthau, that you and Sir Charles, who seem to be occupying the center of this discussion. . . .

Snow: But not by my wish.

Morgenthau: We two are marginal men here.

Hughes: I think you are in positions that are very close to each other, and you lead yourselves almost up to unilateralism and then stop short of it by describing the present situation as impossible. Actually I think you differ with Sir Charles, Mr. Morgenthau, in believing the present situation is less stable than he does. I would say that your arguments finally reduce to the absolute necessity of breaking the circle, the vicious circle, of mutual distrust between us and the Soviet Union, and doing it fast, and arriving at what amounts to an American-Soviet alliance for the preservation of the peace and the denial of nuclear weapons to other nations. And I would maintain that the only way that circle can be broken, and broken fast, is by a dramatic act of renunciation on one side or the other. Since we are not sitting in the Soviet Union, it has to be done here. Q.E.D.

Podhoretz: Well, that's a dramatic point at which to end the discussion at the table and throw the floor open to questions from the audience.

Rabbi Isidore Hoffman.*

Hoffman: Don't you gentlemen think that our dependence on deterrence, our willingness to use the bomb, has been a major factor in our not pursuing other ways of solving the present crisis? Since we have depended so much on the deterrent, if we were to give up that dependence, wouldn't we be doing a much more serious job of finding other solutions?

Podhoretz: Rabbi Hoffman is on the national board of SANE; Mr. Hughes, who is one of the leading members and founding spirits of the Committees of Correspondence, will reply.

Hughes: I just say aye, amen, and every-

* Rabbi Hoffman is Counselor to Jewish Students at Columbia University.

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thing else. I'm glad to find an ally in the audience. I agree totally with you.

Hook: I didn't understand, Rabbi Hoffman, that that was the upshot of the views of the other members of the panel. What I understood Mr. Morgenthau to say was that the deterrent had contributed to keeping both the peace and freedom of the world at least in Western Europe. I also understood him to say—and I'm in agreement with him—that the use or the retention of the deterrent is not incompatible with other means of keeping the peace: military—as Sir Charles pointed out, by building up our conventional weapons—as well as social and political. Where I differ from you is that you would surrender the deterrent, despite the evidence that it has had some limited good, in order to pursue other means, whereas I'm willing to do all the other reasonable things that you want done, without surrendering the deterrent.

Hoffman: If we weren't spending enormous sums building up the deterrent, wouldn't we be doing a better job with the underdeveloped nations?

Morgenthau: If we didn't have the deterrent, we wouldn't have a chance to pursue any other foreign policy to begin with. For the only alternative to deterrence is unilateral disarmament and letting the Soviet Union do as it pleases. However, I agree with what is implicit in your question, Rabbi Hoffman, and that is the unsoundness of our past policy in looking at the deterrent—an ever bigger and, if possible, cheaper deterrent—as the be-all and end-all of our foreign and military policy, as if the foreign and military policies of the United States could be defined in terms of the number of H-bombs and of the delivery systems we possess. This is certainly a self-defeating and ultimately, I am convinced, a suicidal policy. But the issue is not to give up the deterrent and to do something else instead. The issue is rather to maintain the deterrent and to do something else in addition.

Snow: May I just make a comment? I think that Rabbi Hoffman has a point which is of great historical substance, though I think that as history has gone on, the position has become more complex. In fact, there was no necessity for the West, say in 1945, to throw its entire faith into the "deterrent," which is what we did. Remember the population of the West in 1945 was very much larger than that of the Soviet Union. China had not become a Communist country. The only reason—it's a very deep reason—why the West relied on the deterrent was the implied disbelief in the willingness of Western men to bear arms. There is no other reason, and it is exactly the same military heresy which dictated a lot of our policy in World War II itself. It is a thing we must constantly remember. It was not because we were hopelessly outmanned by the Soviet Union. It was not that. In fact, the population of the West was about 50 per cent or more larger, but nevertheless, as a choice which seems to be inherent in the fiber of our society, we thought we could only maintain military and diplomatic superiority by the use of a particular weapon and not through armed forces in the ordinary sense. I think we really ought to examine our hearts about this. Though now the position is somewhat different, some of the thinking remains.

Morgenthau: But even today what you have said, I think, is correct. The attempt to base NATO military strategy on so-called tactical atomic weapons in order to save manpower goes back to the same failure of nerve.

Podhoretz: Mr. Ernest van den Haag.*

Van den Haag: I am not quite clear about Mr. Hughes's position. Do you pre-

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fer the certainty of surrender to the risk of atomic war? What I want to emphasize is that we are not choosing between two certainties, but between, on the one hand, a risk, and on the other hand, a certainty. Do you then prefer the certainty of surrender to the risk of a possible atomic war?

Hughes: I'm glad you asked that question, and I will answer it in the crude and oversimplified fashion in which you asked it. I think, slightly extending Sir Charles's statement, that under present conditions (which I regard as much less stable than he does—I think I am closer to Mr. Morgenthau on this), thermonuclear war is a virtual certainty. Surrender is merely a risk. I would just take your statement and turn it around.

Podhoretz: Mr. Joseph Kraft.*

Kraft: I have a question for Mr. Hughes. One of the few things on which there was general agreement was that it would be useful to have some kind of international control over thermonuclear weapons. The question is this: If the United States renounced the use of thermonuclear weapons in any believable way, wouldn't it be removing one of the few incentives for the Russians to enter into a control agreement?

Hughes: I don't know. This is a really "iffy" question, but I maintain that one of the fallacies we commit in the ordinary conventional-wisdom discussion of the Soviet Union is to believe that the only argument they understand is force. I think it's been implicit around this table that the Russians, at least under Khrushchev, understand other arguments. My guess is that to renounce thermonuclear weapons would be worth more in terms of breaking the vicious circle of mutual distrust—and I apologize for using the phrase again—I think this would be more effective in bringing about an agreement than continuing with deterrence. It may be that I am very wrong, and I think this is where a really crucial choice-point comes. I've made my choice, but I can see there's an extremely logical argument for the other one.

Podhoretz: I suspect that Mr. Hook would like to provide that logical argument.

Hook: Logic, of course, isn't sufficient, but it's necessary. In these questions we are dealing with historical evidence. Mr. Hughes has spoken about faith in the Soviet Union and implied that distrust is unreasonable or vicious. But I submit, Mr. Hughes, and as a historian you will agree, that—I take the risk of repeating Santayana's *bon mot*—"Those who have forgotten the past are doomed to repeat it." We can base ourselves only on probabilities. Whether we have faith or distrust in the Soviet Union depends upon the record of its performance. When Henri Spaak at one UN meeting turned to Molotov, who had charged the West with mistrust, and said, "What else can we have in the light of your behavior since the Second World War?" it seemed to me he was phrasing what was in everybody's mind. In 1948 Bertrand Russell urged the West to use atomic bombs against the Soviet Union if it wouldn't accept reasonable conditions of international atomic control. The U.S. at that time had a monopoly of atomic power. If it had been guilty of the imperialism the Soviet Union charged it with, it would have dropped the bombs. But in an act which was unprecedented in the history of hostile nations, the U.S. offered to surrender its monopoly of these weapons to an international authority with the sole provision that measures be taken to prevent bombs from being dropped on the U.S. Every nation of the world accepted this proposal save the USSR. Do you really think it's unjustified to be mistrustful of the USSR? The experience of all Western nations with the Soviet Union justifies a profound mistrust.

Hughes: May I say that this is really off

* Mr. Kraft is a free-lance political journalist.

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the subject. Let me just say once and for all, because I'm so often misunderstood, that I agree with everything you say about Communist tyranny. We don't have to argue that old one again.

Hook: But we were talking about *trust.*

Hughes: No, but I was talking about trust only on the narrow question of attitude toward thermonuclear weapons. What seems to me has to happen is that the U.S. and the Soviet Union must come to a realization of their mutual interest in having a world totally free of thermonuclear weapons. Now, I think that even in terms of absolute power-political, totally unscrupulous, unprincipled Soviet behavior, this makes sense. They would do better in the world competition without nuclear weapons than by having this nightmare hang over them. I don't really think we'd be giving up much.

Hook: That's all very well, but let us examine your notion of trust, not on the broad historical level but on the narrow level of weapons control. I ask you, Mr. Hughes, what is your evidence—you must have some evidence—that we can reasonably have trust great enough to justify a policy of unilateral disarmament, that the Soviet Union will accept our opening gambit? If it were England we were dealing with, there'd be no question about it. If it were any other non-Communist country in the world, we could have reasonable trust. Look what happened in Geneva at the conference to prohibit further bomb tests. All the concessions since last year have been made by the Americans. The Russians repudiated the agreement made previously that the enforcement group would be headed by a neutral. They have insisted upon a built-in veto by specifying a three-man control which parallels Khrushchev's proposal for the UN. In the light of this action in the narrow sphere of weapons control, I ask you, Mr. Hughes, what are the grounds of your faith?

Hughes: I think they think we don't mean it, and we think they don't mean it. On the test-ban issue, I believe that they've become bored. They want the big discussion. But again, this seems to me rather irrelevant. The main point, it seems to me, is that there need be no ethical ground for faith or belief in benevolent intentions. The main point is, looking at it from the angle of Moscow, that the subversion of non-Communist peoples could progress far more readily and far more predictably if there were no thermonuclear weapons around. This throws off all the Marxist calculations of the future.

Morgenthau: I must disagree with this prediction, for if there were no thermonuclear weapons, the U.S. would not be compelled to pursue the same kind of abstentionist and cautious policy which it has pursued consistently vis-à-vis Communist expansion. It is exactly because it fears thermonuclear war evidently more than does the Soviet Union that it finds itself in this situation. Remove that threat and limit the use of violence to conventional weapons, and any number of wars would have broken out in the world, in some of which the U.S. would have been fully involved.

Hughes: I am afraid I disagree totally. I do not think we have deterred the Soviet Union and I don't think they've deterred us. The reason we do not spring to the defense of Laos at this point has nothing to do with thermonuclear weapons. It is simply that Laos is indefensible, and that the American population is not that interested.

Hook: What about Hungary? One of the specific reasons given for our not coming to the aid of the Hungarian people who rose partly because of our promise to aid in liberating them, was that this would mean a thermonuclear war. We stayed out of Hungary. We stayed out of East Germany, too, when the people rose in 1953.

Hughes: That was a most specious bit of

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reasoning to cover up for a failure of foreign policy. We made the ghastly error of giving the Hungarians the impression that we would come to their aid when we didn't have the slightest intention of doing so. Then when this was exposed to the world, we dragged in the thermonuclear weapons. It seems to me if one thing is true of America and American public opinion, it is that there is a general conviction that there should be no more Koreas. Truman tried it once and got very much burned on it. And I don't think we'll reach any clarity in foreign policy vis-à-vis our own people until we realize that there is very little enthusiasm for local wars, even with conventional weapons, in this country.

Podhoretz: Sir Charles, do you want to get in on this one?

Snow: Only to make the mild comment that since 1945 there have been several acts of aggression on both sides. That is, there have been about two genuine acts of aggression by the East—Hungary and Korea—and two genuine acts of aggression by the West—Suez and Cuba.

Hughes: And Guatemala.

Snow: And I would have thought that you mustn't have all this discussion on a high moral plane. As though we don't do any of these things ourselves, and as though we were entirely governed by the highest motives. I would have thought—and here I am with Mr. Hughes—that in local wars the deterrent has deterred nothing.

Podhoretz: Mr. Lionel Abel.*

Abel: I have a question for Mr. Hughes. Since you say you are not a pacifist, would you also be in favor of militarizing the entire American people—bearing in mind Sir Charles's remark about the unwillingness of Americans to bear arms?

Hughes: I think, and I've drawn from George Kennan on this, that there should be a military system not unlike the Swiss. I think that universal military service on a militia basis with serious summer training and a serious plan of how you retreat to your mountains and of how you organize guerilla activities—I think this might make a great deal of sense. I think the Swiss have the best army in the Western world and the one best adapted to contemporary conditions. But the Swiss are not a military people. I would object to your term "militarization" because it implies the acceptance of military values and the prestige of generals in the national life and a big war production effort that influences foreign policy. I may have a very romantic 19th-century view, but the Swiss make it work in the 20th century. I have much more the "nation-in-arms" point of view, which has never been a militarist point of view.

Snow: I'd like to chime in on this because I think it is important. It would be a very cheap price to pay for a real lessening of the thermonuclear tension if everyone had to do a certain amount of military training. I'd pay that price with the utmost grace, and I should have thought that most people of good will would agree.

Podhoretz: Are you talking about conventional armies, or are you talking about the kind of militia Mr. Hughes was describing?

Snow: There are various alternatives, and some countries have gone in for more orthodox military establishments. Very highly civilized and democratic countries have taken this line with no loss that I can see. Sweden, for instance, which is a highly civilized country, has done this.

Hook: In conversations with people in Switzerland and people in Norway, I got the impression they hoped that the United States would not surrender its deterrent. They would hate to be dependent exclusively upon their militia system. As I see the Communist system in operation, I

* Mr. Abel is a playwright and critic.

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think it is highly romantic to imagine that a militia alone could prevent a country from being occupied and its population deported to other regions of the world. Sir Charles was right when he said that at the end of the Second World War there was a great reluctance on the part of the Western powers to continue military training. I don't know whether you are aware of it, Sir Charles, but in this country at the end of the last war there was a mass movement, which some of us tried to stop, mobilized under the slogan, "Bring the boys back home." I think one of the great disasters of American policy was the withdrawal of the U.S. Army from Europe—an act which, despite all our trust in the Soviet Union, was not met with a corresponding withdrawal. Russian armies remained astride of Europe while the Americans turned back to normal business. In fact, the reason so many people believed the boys should come home was the same touching faith in the Soviet Union that Mr. Hughes has.

Hughes: May I say once again that I do *not* have a touching faith in the Soviet Union. I've said it twice already. How many more times do I have to say it?

Podhoretz: Mr. Hughes, what kind of faith *do* you have in the Soviet Union?

Hughes: I don't have much more than Mr. Hook. We draw different conclusions from the same data.

Morgenthau: Whatever kind of faith it is, it isn't touching.

Hook: Well, it's not touching, but very profound. Let us return to a very important point. I believe there is no doubt that at the end of the war the peoples of Great Britain and the U.S. thought that they could work out a *modus vivendi* with the Soviet Union. NATO came into existence not as a result of Western aggression but as a defense against Soviet incursions in Western Europe, particularly after Czechoslovakia. It was with great reluctance that both Great Britain and the U.S. adopted this posture of defense. I agree with you, Sir Charles, that "he is all fault who owns none," and that none of us is free of guilt. But, perhaps not behind your position so much as behind Mr. Hughes's position, I find a kind of unconscious, and sometimes I think conscious, equation between the Soviet Union and its record of aggressions in the world, and that of the U.S. and the West. I think that the record. . . .

Hughes: Let me interrupt you. Let me put on the record again, since it seems to be necessary to spell out the obvious, that Western aggressions have been far less serious than Soviet aggressions, since 1945, or whatever date you wish.

Hook: Then I can only conclude that whatever the basis of Mr. Hughes's faith and trust in the Soviet Union is, it has no grounds either in logic, psychology, or historical fact.

Podhoretz: That's a lot of ground. Mr. Robert Bierstadt.*

Bierstadt: I'd like to ask a question about Sir Charles's statement that in the event of a thermonuclear war England would be finished. It seems to me that the United Kingdom has one alternative that is denied to us, and that is the neutralist position that is recommended now by the anti-Gaitskell wing of the Labor party, and of course by Bertrand Russell, and even implied by the Conservative government's decision not to proceed with the Blue Streak missile program. Isn't it possible that by making a commitment to neutralism the United Kingdom might have an alternative that is denied to us?

Snow: I don't think it's a very real alternative. I don't think that the strategic position in the world would be affected. I think in any conceivable war between the United States and the Soviet Union

* Mr. Bierstadt is chairman of the department of sociology at New York University.

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England would be a very important aircraft carrier, so to speak. I never have thought that neutralism is anything more than an extraordinarily remote and chancy last resort. I doubt that there's very much in it. I think, on quite different grounds, it might be entirely reasonable and would help some of this Nth-power problem if England said: "We're not going to have our own nuclear arms." That would make, I think, very good military sense. In fact, we really can't deliver the damn things; even if we've got them, we're bound to depend on yours. I think I should be in favor of that, and it probably would be the one way of getting the French to renounce theirs.

Podhoretz: Mr. Robert Silvers.*

Silvers: Mr. Morgenthau was asked whether he knew of some way of escaping the "red or dead" alternative, and he never had a chance to answer. Could he answer that now?

Morgenthau: I was rather happy that this chance passed by me. Now I have to face the inevitable. Of course, I am very frequently asked similar questions and can never answer them to the satisfaction of the questioner, because there is no honest possibility of pulling out a blueprint and saying that's it. But I can try to lay before you the general principles which I think must guide any concrete policy, if we want to escape those equally absurd alternatives which I discussed before.

It is a fundamental fact of contemporary history that the so-called sovereign nation-state has been made as obsolete by the recent technological revolutions of transportation, communications, and weaponry as the feudal principle of political organization was made obsolete by the first industrial revolution of the steam engine. We saw this very clearly during the Suez crisis when the great nation-states of Europe were no longer able to pursue independent political and military policies. In a sense we see it right now in this country when so powerful a nation as the United States is no longer able to pursue an independent policy with regard to Cuba or Laos, and is no longer able to protect its interests vis-à-vis nations which by any standard of comparison are infinitely weaker in the material sense than the United States. So we are living in a political world which has been left behind by technological developments. Nothing short of a political revolution commensurate with the technological revolutions through which we have passed, through which we are in the process of passing, and which are still ahead of us, will solve the problem to which you have referred.

To be more specific: the crucial importance of the Geneva negotiations concerning the cessation of atomic tests lies exactly in that if they should be successful, the world would have taken a first step beyond the nation-state toward at least one supra-national agency controlling one, very limited technical aspect of atomic power. I think in this direction lies the only salvation I can see.

Podhoretz: Mr. Philip Green.†

Green: Mr. Hook, I'd like to ask you one question. I understand the ethical system by which you personally choose what we might call death rather than dishonor. But I do not understand, and I wish you'd clarify, the ethical system that gives you the right to make that choice for other people who have never been consulted—for example, the Okinawans who live as American chattels and who would be among the first to go in the event of a thermonuclear war.

Hook: First of all, I should like to point out that I am not asking for the power to make that decision. I am making a proposal which, if accepted, would obviate the necessity of making a decision of that sort. On the other hand, I maintain that

* Mr. Silvers is an editor of *Harper's* magazine.

† Mr. Green is an assistant in instruction in Princeton's government department.

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your position and the position of Mr. Hughes makes it more likely that this fateful decision will be taken by somebody. I am a democrat and therefore prepared to accept the consensus of opinion in this country on the policy we should follow. Of course, I make a distinction between a personal decision and a social decision. Morally, I don't have to be bound by what the majority decides; but so long as I am a democrat then I have to accept, *as* a democrat, the freely-given judgment of the majority. However, if our democracy were to act in the way in which, say, Hitler's or Khrushchev's regimes act, I would surrender my belief in democracy and try to overthrow it. But I wouldn't pretend that I was a democrat and at the same time try to overthrow a properly arrived-at democratic consensus.

Behind your question, Mr. Green, and in your charge against me, I find a great deal of moral hypocrisy. You ask whether I am prepared to support a decision which will affect the lives of those who did not have a choice in making it. Did you ask a question of that sort when we decided to go to war against Hitler? Against Japan? When we bombed occupied France? When our weapons destroyed people who did not themselves have an opportunity to make that decision? Every war that has been conducted in the West in the history of mankind has involved this morally tragic situation. Would it be different if we surrendered to Communism? Wouldn't we be deciding the fate of others too?

You are worried about the Okinawans; were you worried about them when we fought against Japan? Yes, we bombed the Japanese islands, but what was the alternative? The alternative was defeat, and acceptance of a system of infamy. It is a question of our basic values and whether we are prepared to accept life in a community under any circumstances. Bertrand Russell, who has soft-pedaled this note recently, once said that he could conceive of a world that morally had eaten of some poisoned root, and in which therefore the cessation of life might be the lesser evil. As a theoretical possibility, no matter what kind of moral economy one adopts, one can conceive of a situation in which the conditions of life for a people, like the conditions of life for an individual, would be unendurable. This, as I have said, was the decision made historically by the Jewish people in fighting against Rome. It was made by many communities in fighting against Hitler. As far as these people were concerned, that constituted their whole world.

I do not want to be taxed with the monstrous cruelty of snuffing out somebody else's life because of a decision *I* make. If one generalized the principle behind your position, it would be impossible to adopt any kind of social legislation whatsoever. Every law limits the freedom of some individual. If we pass a law which forbids night work for women, some women will lose jobs which they badly need. In the end we make a decision on the basis of the over-all ethical values we're committed to. I am prepared to defend these values in a concrete historical situation.

I conclude with this point: we are confronted with a political choice. My view is really an appeal to our political common sense. The only faith that I have in the Russians is the faith that they want to survive. I believe that if they know *they* cannot survive a nuclear attack against the West, there will be none. Once that has been made clear to them, I would present them with alternatives again and again and again for multilateral disarmament under adequate controls. I would try by using our tremendous wealth to build up a freedom-loving welfare economy—an open society—everywhere in the world. And I would fight for the minds of people everywhere, including the Soviet Union, in the hope of preserving a stalemate—that tired phrase of Churchill's, "the balance of terror," is still useful—until changes take place in the Communist empire, and they move in their own

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way toward a community which would make it possible to establish a world state. I am not a fanatic who thinks *all* the problems of the day are those posed by Communism. But I do think it is sober truth to say that if there weren't a Communist totalitarian empire in the world today, it would be possible to develop a world community, in which the chances of these nuclear nightmares would be increasingly small. But we must take the facts as we find them, using whatever intelligence and courage we have in hopes of finding a solution.

Green: I did not say that I would not fight or that I would surrender. I merely was trying to make the point that when I fight it will be for myself and for whoever wants me to fight for them. I would like to associate myself with Mr. Hughes's remark that every war with the exception of World War II was unnecessary and that many facets of World War II were immoral.

Hook: What I said seems to me still valid. If you were prepared to support the Second World War, then you were responsible for a decision which destroyed the lives of people who had no choice in making that decision and who did not want you to fight for them. There were a great many people in Western Europe who were prepared to live under Hitler. Why did you approve destroying them? And so I add to my charge of moral hypocrisy, one of logical inconsistency.

Podhoretz: A much more serious charge. Mr. Irving Kristol.*

Kristol: I have a question to the panel in general on this matter of faith in the Soviet Union. I think I see what Mr. Hughes is getting at and I don't think this question has been adequately discussed. What Mr. Hughes is saying, if I understand him correctly, is that it does not make sense from the Russian-Communist point of view to have a world in which there is a threat of thermonuclear destruction; that from the Communist point of view it makes sense to enter into a nuclear disarmament agreement. The question, therefore, is why don't they do it? I personally think they don't do it because they are Communists, because they are not rational, because there are elements of mythology in Communism which dictate their policies. But I should like to hear what the members of this panel think.

Hughes: I think they don't do it because they think we don't mean it. And so we have to do something dramatic to show that we mean it.

Morgenthau: It is of course obvious that the Russians as rational beings have the same interest as everybody else in not being destroyed in a nuclear war. But there is a very long step from this simple recognition of a rational interest to political action putting this rational interest into practice. The statesmen of Russia are no more motivated by one simple rational consideration than anybody else. We all have contradictory motives; we all are torn by different tendencies, and so are the Russians. On the one hand, Mr. Khrushchev knows that a nuclear war would make an end to the Bolshevik regime in Russia, if not to the very national existence of Russia. But on the other hand, he says to Walter Lippmann that there are neutral nations, but no neutral men. I shall never surrender the security of the Soviet Union to a non-Communist, he says, any more than you would surrender the care for your security to a Communist.

So you have here two incompatible positions within the mind of the same man. And the question arises, how do you transcend these two incompatible positions? Mr. Hughes says we ought to make a dramatic gesture, which would really be an unprecedented act of renunciation, in order to show the Russians the right way. This assumes that Mr. Khrushchev is mo-

* Mr. Kristol has been an editor of COMMENTARY, co-editor of *Encounter* in London, and editor of the *Reporter*.

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tivated by nothing but his rational interest in surviving in the present world. But he is certainly also very much motivated by the specter of a Communist world which he firmly believes the process of history is bound to bring about. Presented with such an opportunity, I must say my faith in Mr. Khrushchev's rationality in terms of survival would certainly yield to my distrust of Mr. Khrushchev as the apostle of Communism.

Hook: Mr. Kristol's question as to why the Russians don't accept a disarmament treaty brought from Mr. Hughes the rejoinder, "Because they don't believe we mean it." Now that's a little ambiguous. First of all, we did make a dramatic gesture at the time of the Acheson-Lilienthal proposals. We made it, and the Communists rejected it. Will Mr. Hughes say that we didn't mean it? If he does, again I would like to ask for evidence.

Hughes: Incidentally, I didn't say we didn't mean it. I said they *thought* we didn't. That's a different thing.

Hook: Oh, well, that just puts the question further back. Why did they believe we didn't mean it? What could we do to make them believe that we mean it, short of surrendering to them? We made them this offer and they turned it down. I doubt that they thought we didn't mean it. There is another plausible explanation. It's this: the Russians do not fear that we will use the nuclear weapon. On several occasions, I believe, they have actually implied that it's morally impossible for the West to use the nuclear weapon without being provoked. Mr. Morgenthau indicated another line of thought that moves them. If they know their flank is covered, so to speak, that they needn't worry about an atomic Pearl Harbor on our side, why should they forgo the position of strength that they get from a war of nerves? I think Khrushchev is counting upon the growing hysteria in the West. And by hysteria I don't mean fear—intelligent fear is a good thing—I mean blind fear. He's counting upon the growth of hysterical fear in the West to force it to retreat again and again. Obviously that's the logic—or psychology—of the situation. If you say to the Russians, "Short of war we will use all means to stop you," what's to prevent them from closing their iron fingers around Berlin? Step by step they will march on, or to use an analogy of Kissinger's, we can lose a football game by a series of five-yard dashes as much as by one end-run. If the Communists can count upon our hysterical fear of world destruction, then they can sit pretty. And they *are* sitting pretty. They *are* winning the world. They're winning the world because we haven't worked out other alternatives. However, they can't be finally sure of winning the world until we surrender the deterrent.

Snow: I'm getting rather left out of this party and I'm going to say something which I don't particularly like to say. The Russians have at least as much suspicion of you as you have of them. This is very real. They lost twenty million people in the last war—twenty million, one out of ten—and I've never been in a Russian family where someone hadn't had an immediate casualty. They've seen American bases around the Soviet perimeter, and this seems to them extremely immediate. They just do not trust you any more than you trust them. And I must say—and I've got to say this—that traveling a lot in this country, it's been extremely hard to get people to discuss the Soviet Union or any Russian attitude on the plane of rationality. Remember there is a naive skepticism, naive suspicion, that is quite as real as naive credulity, which Mr. Hook has been accusing Mr. Hughes of. A superb example of naive skepticism was of course the folly of thinking that Gagarin's flight wasn't absolutely authentic.

Podhoretz: Mr. Moshe Decter.*

* Mr. Decter is a free-lance writer and researcher who specializes in Soviet affairs.

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Decter: I'd like to ask Sir Charles to whom he's referring when he talks about "they" being suspicious of us in the Soviet Union? If you mean ordinary people, that can hardly amount to very much, because ordinary people don't constitute public opinion in the Soviet Union. If you mean the authorities, then surely they can't be naive enough to believe that the bases with which we have ringed their territory were created by us unprovokedly. There seems to me to be a false equation behind what Sir Charles is saying.

Snow: This is an example, I think, of the difference in moral balance with which we view our own actions and the actions of others. When I say "they," by the way, I mean the people I know in Russia; they're very roughly scientists, writers, and a certain number of politicos, very much the same kind of people professionally as are gathered here this afternoon. You may think, and I dare say you're right to think, that having bases in Turkey is a fine pacific action and a very valuable action from every point of view. But the idea that the Russians think that is really stretching the point. If they had bases in Mexico, would you think that was such an admirable gesture?

Decter: But why did we get bases in Turkey in the first place?

Snow: I'm simply trying to answer the question that was asked: what do they really think? Why aren't they falling immediately for a nuclear pact? If they thought they could get a nuclear pact, a real nuclear pact, my bet is that they would take it with their arms open.

Podhoretz: Sir Charles, could you elaborate a little on what you mean by a real nuclear pact?

Snow: Well, I'm afraid that here the depth of suspicion on both sides, and for very good historical reasons, is absolute. Until that is broken—and I think that here I agree with Mr. Morgenthau—any small thing will help (and this is why I attach great importance to the nuclear test ban). A test ban would be the first sign that we can discuss more important and bigger things on the plane of reason. But I don't believe that the plane of reason is the plane on which these discussions have been taking place in either country.

Podhoretz: Sir Charles, on the test-ban question, you disagree then with Mr. Hook who sees Russian actions at Geneva recently as an indication that they are not serious about negotiating a test ban. Is that so?

Hook: I didn't go that far; I said that the upshot of the negotiations in Geneva is discouraging. . . .

Snow: Oh, yes.

Hook: And I could not take seriously Mr. Hughes's statement that the Russians are bored by it and that they're interested in the disarmament conference. If they're interested in the disarmament conference, why should they blow up a step leading to it? I said it was discouraging. I am in favor of a test ban with decent facilities for inspection. I agree with all the concessions which the West has made. After all, the British have been a moderating influence, Sir Charles, in these negotiations. I don't know what sentiment you've run up against in the United States, but I think our negotiators at Geneva have been very patient. The conference is on the verge of being suspended now only because, as I understand it—subject to correction by those who have studied the matter more carefully—the Russians themselves have reneged on their agreement that the controlling directorate would be in the hands of some neutral person. My discouragement is the basis for doubt of progress. If tomorrow the Russians reversed themselves, I would welcome it. I am not committed to a policy independently of the consequences and of fresh evidence.

Snow: Let me say at once, I am worried

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too. We all know President Kennedy's chief scientific adviser, Jerome Wiesner, who has expressed his views. He's a man for whom scientists everywhere have the utmost respect—both for his intellect and for his good will. I've no question of that whatsoever, and I'm sure I can say that many Soviet scientists would feel the same. So I'm worried and puzzled.

Podhoretz: You have no explanation, then, to offer for the behavior of the Russians? Mr. Morgenthau, can you perhaps offer an explanation?

Morgenthau: I think one can explain the Russian behavior at Geneva quite rationally on the basis of their utter distrust of our intentions. For the Russian negotiators made the point—and I think Mr. Khrushchev himself made the point—that the negotiations would not affect testing by France, and that if under present conditions we and the Russians were to sign a test-ban treaty, we would simply continue testing under the guise of French operations. And in that case we would take advantage of what the French learned while the Russians would stick to the agreement. So again you have the same kind of distrust which is at the basis of the whole situation.

Hook: Mr. Morgenthau, I don't understand your analysis at this point. If this is the consideration which moves the Russians, how would the acceptance of their counter-proposal for a three-man secretariat meet it? Even under those conditions you couldn't stop the French, could you?

Morgenthau: That is correct; but of course, the three-man proposition is a mere subterfuge. Mr. Khrushchev is not serious about this—he can't be.

Podhoretz: Mr. Spencer Brown.*

Brown: I'd like to ask the panel their views on why the Communists are so enthusiastic about the campaign for nuclear disarmament.

Hughes: I think it's true that the Soviet Union is enthusiastic over Western agitation for unilateral disarmament. But I would say this is no reason for our not doing it. I've always said we should do what's right whether the Soviet Union applauds or hisses us. We cannot constantly gear our action to the Soviet reaction. But it's obvious why they're enthusiastic—because the threat to their existence would be removed. It's so obvious that I can't understand why you asked the question.

Hook: The question was naive, but Mr. Hughes's answer was also naive. The Russians would like us to adopt unilateral disarmament because this would make it possible for them to dominate the world without any opposition. In other words, this is their political goal and therefore one reason for us to be suspicious. And now for my own position on unilateral disarmament—the only kind I favor is unilateral disarmament by the Soviet Union, on the ground that objectively they have nothing to fear from us.

Morgenthau: I have nothing to add to what has already been said, but I will make one general comment. If I were in favor of unilateral disarmament it wouldn't bother me one way or the other if the Soviet Union were in favor of it or against it. It so happens, for instance, that I am in favor of racial equality and I am against discrimination. So is the Soviet Union. That doesn't make any difference to me.

Podhoretz: I think everybody in this room is in favor of unilateral disarmament by the Russians. On that we can all probably agree.

Mr. William Phillips.†

Phillips: I'm a little puzzled by the question of what the political consequences of

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multilateral disarmament might be. As I understand it, the consensus of the panel has been that at the moment the non-nuclear forces of the Soviet Union are stronger than those of the United States. And, as Sir Charles said, the Communists seem to have a greater willingness to keep men under arms than we do. If that is so, and if nuclear weapons have constituted *the* deterrent to a Soviet take-over, what would deter a Soviet take-over if we arrived at multilateral disarmament? Perhaps the answer to this question might explain why bilateral nuclear disarmament has not been agreed upon.

Hook: When I say I believe in multilateral disarmament I have two points in mind. First, assuming that we have adequate inspection, it has to be a phased disarmament—that is to say, not sudden, overnight. And in the nature of the case we should be grateful for even a little progress. We should feel our way; we can't be certain of our positions no matter how strongly we hold them. We live in a contingent universe. Maybe we shall discover some enemies of Earth on Mars, and then we can all agree. My program of multilateral disarmament envisages the extension to conventional weapons too, because if it didn't, then what we would be saying is that we want to reduce the West to the position of a nation that wields clubs against other powers using conventional weapons. Ultimately, I would like to abolish all weapons. But I want to begin with the most dangerous ones first.

Phillips: In discussing many of the military and political problems that came up this afternoon, Mr. Hook, you applied the criterion of whether it might not permit a Russian take-over. In other words, your anti-Communism—and I don't disagree with much of your anti-Communism—is a part of your total position on disarmament. In answering my question you don't tell me how Khrushchev will be prevented from taking over West Berlin if the kind of disarmament that you say you are for were to be achieved.

Hook: I still don't understand the drift of your question. After all, we did offer to give up our atom bomb monopoly in 1948. I am in favor of multilateral disarmament starting with atomic weapons. There would be a certain risk involved, but the risk of a Soviet take-over would not be as great if the Russians only had conventional weapons. If the West really relies on conventional weapons, and is prepared to make the effort and pay the price, it has the manpower to equal Soviet strength. I don't think the Soviet Union will go to war with any weapons unless it's sure to win. And so I would gradually scale down weapons on both sides, and leave to the peoples of the world the free decision as to whether they want to live under Communism or not.

Podhoretz: Having come in late, Sir Charles has had less opportunity to speak than the others, and perhaps it's fitting that he should have the last word on this point.

Snow: Mr. Phillips's question is a very simple one, but of course a deep one. That is, what is the position in the world if in fact you get an effective disarmament agreement? This is a real and very interesting question. I would have thought that certainly some opposition to nuclear disarmament from the West has come because they are very troubled about the answer. . . .

Podhoretz: I'm afraid I must interrupt you, Sir Charles. Our time is up, and we only have enough left for me to thank all of you for an extremely stimulating discussion.

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GERSHOM SCHOLEM

MARTIN BUBER'S HASIDISM

A Critique

THERE CAN BE no doubt that the contribution of Martin Buber to the Western world's knowledge of the Hasidic movement has been a most distinguished one. Before Buber took it upon himself to introduce and interpret Hasidism to Western readers, the movement was practically unknown to students of religion—despite the fact that it had been a major force in the life and thought of East European Jewry since it crystallized in western Ukraina in the middle of the 18th century. Throughout the period known in Jewish history as the Enlightenment, Hasidism was seen mainly as an outbreak of extreme obscurantism allied to those forces in the Jewish past to which the protagonists of a modern enlightened Judaism found themselves in fiercest opposition. So, too, with the great Jewish scholars of the last century who initiated the "scientific" study of the universe of Judaism—men like Heinrich Graetz, Abraham Geiger, and Leopold Zunz: mysticism and emotionalism held no attraction for them and they repudiated the values for which movements based on such tendencies stood. It was only toward the turn of the century that certain Jewish writers and scholars living in Russia tried to take a more sober view. This new view was linked to a general revaluation of Jewish history which treated it as the history of a living people rather than as the paradigm of an enlightened theology to be judged by the extent to which it lived up to abstract standards set by philosophers and religious thinkers. We can take it for granted that the new wave of Jewish nationalism which erupted in the late 19th century, and a romantic urge for discovering the deeper forces active in the life of the Jewish masses, played a great part in bringing about this change. Scholars like Simon Dubnow, enthusiasts like Samuel Horodezky, and great writers like Judah Leib Peretz, heralded the new era, and though Dubnow's pioneering researches into Hasidism were marked by a rather cool and reserved tone, this was more than outweighed by the glamor which the discovery of the world of Hasidic legend lent to the movement. Since Peretz, the poetic and emotional appeal of Hasidic legend has deeply influenced Jewish literature, especially in Hebrew, Yiddish, and German.

It is within this context that Buber's lifelong fascination with Hasidism and his contribution to the understanding of it has to be approached. Overwhelmed by what he took to be the message of Hasidism when it first presented itself to him in his youthful quest for a living Judaism, Buber has devoted nearly fifty years of an outstanding literary career to formulating and reformulating the meaning of this

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message. The Zionist credo that brought him to Hasidism in the first place became interwoven with the conviction that "no renewal of Judaism is possible that does not bear in itself the elements of Hasidism." Being a writer of great charm and vigor, he made an immediate impact with his first books, *The Tales of Rabbi Nachman* and *The Legend of the Baal-Shem,* and from that time on, an almost unending stream of Hasidic material and interpretative discussion has flowed from Buber's pen, reaching its climax in *Tales of the Hasidim* and other books of a more theoretical character which have been extremely influential over the last fifteen years.

Buber's influence is not hard to account for. Whereas the ardor of some other apologists for the teachings of Hasidism, like Horodezky, was essentially naive, and their writing sometimes lovely in its unaffected simplicity and sometimes boring, Buber has a deep and penetrating mind which not only admires intuition in others but has it at its own command. The earnest manner in which a writer of such literary refinement and intellectual subtlety propounded what to him seemed the very soul of Hasidism could not fail to produce a deep impression on our generation. He possesses that rare combination of a searching mind and literary refinement that makes for a great writer. As a matter of fact, many of us have come to think of Hasidism primarily in terms of Buber's philosophical re-interpretation, which has been accompanied by such a wealth of seemingly irresistible evidence in the shape of Hasidic legends and sayings as to baffle the would-be critic. Fifty years of neo-Hasidic teaching have evoked a strong response from the Jewish world; and, so far as I am aware, have found competent scholars somewhat unwilling to raise any fundamental questions about whether everything in this inspired and beautifully worded interpretation might stand the test of a sober and critical analysis. Dubnow, in a very general way, expressed certain doubts about the "modern" turn of Buber's Hasidism, but he did not substantiate them, and the emotional (to say nothing of the artistic) appeal of Buber's writings is, of course, so infinitely greater than that of Dubnow's rather arid discussion of Hasidic thought that there could be little question as to which side of the argument would prevail. Yet, while historical research has progressed far beyond Dubnow's achievement and has opened up many new vistas and insights into the origin and development of Hasidism, Buber's writings—especially those of his later years—have only recently begun to evoke critical discussion. Such a discussion seems to me very much called for, and I should therefore like to take up one here, necessarily limiting myself to a few points which I consider fundamental.

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS of Buber's interpretation of Hasidism has to confront certain special difficulties at the very outset. The biggest is that Buber, although a keen student of Hasidic literature, does not write as a scholar citing chapter and verse for his contentions. He combines facts and quotations as suits his purpose, which is to present Hasidism as a spiritual phenomenon and not as a historical one. He has frequently said that he is not interested in history, and in the context of our discussion this means two things, both of equal importance. First, he ignores much material which does not interest him, although for an understanding of Hasidism as a historical phenomenon it may be of the greatest value. And secondly, the material that he does select is frequently bound up with his own interpretation of its meaning. (I shall have to say more of this later.)

The other big difficulty facing the critical analyst of Buber is to be found in the fact of his own development. Buber started as an enthusiastic admirer or even follower of mystical religion, and it was his discovery of the mystical core of living Judaism in the Hasidic movement that

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struck him most forcefully when he first came into contact with its literature and tradition. He saw Hasidism as the flower of Jewish mysticism, as "Cabbala transformed into Ethos," and accordingly his earlier interpretation—as found in the famous chapter "The Life of the Hasidim" which introduces his *Legend of the Baal-Shem*—was colored by this view. Some years later, however, his thinking underwent a further development bringing about a deep change in his outlook, a change characterized in his own philosophical writings by the dialogue *Daniel* of 1913 on the one hand and *I and Thou* (1923) on the other. Here he foresook the world of mysticism and took a new stand which brought him into the forefront of what would today be called religious existentialism, however much he used to shun the term. But even in this new phase, Hasidism continued to serve as his paradigm. A little pamphlet like his *The Way of Man in Hasidic Teaching* is not only a gem of literature but at the same time an extraordinary piece of religious anthropology couched in the language of Hasidism and inspired by a great quantity of authentic Hasidic sayings. It is precisely this problem of determining the kind of inspiration Buber found in the old sayings, and how, interpreting them in his own way, he transformed them, to which I shall devote the main part of my discussion.

IN THIS LAST phase of his selective presentation of Hasidism, Buber no longer stressed the essential identity of Cabbala and Hasidism, as he had done in his earlier work. Even while acknowledging strong links between the two phenomena, he strove to establish an essential distinction between Hasidism and Cabbala (which he now chose to call gnosticism). He saw two conflicting kinds of minds at work in Hasidism—although the creators of the movement may not have been conscious of the split. One kind was formed by the Cabbalistic tradition, which aimed at a knowledge of, or at least an insight into, the mysteries of divinity, and which led Hasidism into speculations of a theosophical character. Buber was fully aware that Hasidism developed within the framework of the Lurianic Cabbala; indeed he accepted and elaborated upon my own characterization of the Lurianic Cabbala as an outstanding example of a gnostic system of thought within the confines of Orthodox Judaism.* But this Cabbalistic gnosis was not, according to Buber, a creative element in Hasidism. Its conceptual apparatus was used by the great leaders of Hasidism, but they transferred its meaning from the sphere of divine mysteries to the world of man and his encounter with God. This, said Buber, was the truly creative aspect of Hasidism. And since only the creative impulse counts, he felt entitled to disregard the Cabbalistic (or "gnostic") element in Hasidism almost completely—conceiving of it as no more than a kind of umbilical cord that, once the new spiritual creation exists in its own right, must be severed if we are to see the new creation in its own genuine mode of being.

There are many formulations of this attitude in Buber's writings. Let me quote but one:

> The Hasidic movement takes over from the Cabbala only what it needs for the theological foundation of an enthusiastic but not over-exalted life in responsibility —responsibility of a single individual for the piece of world entrusted to him. Gnostic theologumena that are thus taken over are transformed; their ground and their atmosphere are transformed with them. From spiritualities enthroned in the unbinding [I think the translator meant The Absolute—G. S.], they became the core of authentications. . . . Therefore everything has become different. In the place of esoterically regulated meditations has stepped the unprescribable endowing of each action with strength of intention

* See Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (Schocken Books), Chapter 7.

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arising ever again from the moment. Not in the seclusion of the Ascetics and schools of Ascetics does the holy now appear, but in the joy in one another of the masters and their communities. And—what was unthinkable in the circles of the old Cabbala—the "simple man" is held in honor, that is, the man of the original *devotio,* the man by nature at one with himself who lacks the secret knowing as well as rabbinical knowledge, but can do without both because united he lives the united service. Where the mystic vortex circled, now stretches the way of man.*

This statement, although pronounced in a voice of authority, must nevertheless fail to carry conviction for anyone familiar with both Cabbalistic and Hasidic literature. In order, however, to understand the strange mixture of oversimplification, error, and truth it contains, we must turn our attention to a basic feature of Buber's approach to the phenomenon of Hasidism: namely his conviction that the chief source of our knowledge of Hasidism is its legends. This conviction, together with Buber's method of selection, is the only thing that can explain statements like the one quoted above.

AT THIS POINT we must remember that the voluminous literature of Hasidism ultimately falls into two categories. There is a very large body of theoretical writings mostly comprising homilies, commentaries on Biblical texts, and tracts on prayer and other aspects of devotion. The most important of these works—which embodied the teachings of the great saints of Hasidism, the *Tsaddikim,* and which, by way of illustration, frequently quoted epigrammatic sayings by them or short tales about them—were written between 1770 and 1815, when Hasidism became a major force in Poland and Russia, propagating its views and mode of life both by word of mouth and by the pen. An even more voluminous literature of the same type was produced after 1815, but to a great extent it only contained variations on the motifs developed in the earlier books. The second category of Hasidic literature consists of a large body of legendary writings, biographies, and tales of the miraculous deeds and wonderful sayings of the *Tsaddikim.* This legendary literature developed during the closing years of the 18th century and enjoyed an ever-growing popularity among the Hasidic masses because, it was held, to relate stories about the saints was on the same spiritual level as studying the divine mysteries. The main features of Hasidic legend crystallized in the first half of the 19th century, incorporating in many cases legends of much older vintage and coming from circles outside and preceding Hasidism. Since about 1860, several hundred volumes of this type have been published, drawing into their orbit each and every figure among the Hasidic leadership, including those of later times.

Now Buber's presentation and interpretation of Hasidism is based almost entirely on this second category of Hasidic literature—on the legends, apothegmata, and epigrams of the Hasidic saints. He says: "Because Hasidism in the first instance is not a category of teaching but one of life, our chief source of knowledge of Hasidism is its legends, and only after them comes its theoretical literature. The latter is a commentary, the former the text, even though a text that has been handed down in a state of extreme corruption. . . . It is foolish to protest that the legend does not convey to us the reality of Hasidic life. Naturally, the legend is no chronicle, but it is truer than the chronicle for those who know how to read it."†

This continuous emphasis on the preeminence of legendary tradition over the theoretical literature reveals a methodological principle of approach which I consider more than questionable. Of

* *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism* (Horizon Press), p. 253.
† *Ibid,* p. 27.

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course, the terms used by Buber are somewhat confusing. What is a "category of teaching" as opposed to one of "life" when it comes to analyzing a historical phenomenon whose teaching is inextricably tied to the life it preached? Buber's metaphors about text and commentary are misleading and conceal the fact that the so-called commentary was the first and most authoritative statement of the meaning of this life long before its legends developed. Furthermore, strictly speaking, these legends are themselves obviously no more than a commentary on what Buber would call life. Life is reflected both in teaching and legend, but we can say with assurance that the very coming into being of this Hasidic life was deeply influenced by ideas embodied in the theoretical literature, whereas at its origin it certainly was not influenced by legend.

I see this as one of the main pitfalls into which Buber's ambiguous use of the term "life" has precipitated him. No doubt, for the purposes of aesthetic presentation the legends have a greater advantage and appeal, and lend themselves to a subjectivist interpretation more easily than the theoretical writings which contain a sustained line of argument and on which, in my humble opinion, a discussion of the meaning of Hasidism—even if we call it "Hasidic life"—must be based. It is very interesting to note that in the course of the years, as Buber's existentialist and subjectivist "philosophy of the dialogue" became more developed and elaborate, his references to the theoretical literature of Hasidism became ever weaker and more scanty. I dare say that many readers of Buber would never so much as suspect that such a literature even exists.

Buber apparently regarded these sources as too dependent upon earlier Cabbalistic literature to be considered indigenously Hasidic. Dependent they indeed are. Many of them, and some of the most famous, are written entirely in the language of Cabbalism, and it is a task for subtle scholarship—by no means an easy one—to define exactly where their ideas depart from those of their Cabbalistic predecessors. The Hasidic authors obviously were not aware of having broken in any way with the gnostic tradition of Cabbalism, and they wrote plainly as gnostics—Buber's protest to the contrary notwithstanding. When Buber declared in favor of the legends of Hasidism as its truly creative contribution, he put himself into the rather paradoxical position of contending that the originality of the movement was revealed more genuinely in a genre of literature which mostly came into being almost fifty years after the period when Hasidism was actually created—a period embodied in the theoretical books he has chosen to side-step. This is a contention that cannot stand.

BUBER, IN SHORT, by making his choice and omitting whatever clashes with its demands, assumes an authority which we cannot grant him. To describe the universe of Hasidism, the way of life it propagated, and the teachings of its masters exclusively on the basis of its legends is equivalent to describing Islamic mysticism by taking into account only the sayings of the great Sufis and disregarding their voluminous theoretical (equally "gnostic") literature; or to describing Roman Catholicism by selecting and interpreting the choicest epigrams of the saints of the Church without regard to its dogmatic theology. No doubt this could be done, and an analysis or even a mere compilation of the *obiter dicta* of their great spirits would certainly open up a wonderful vista into the worlds of Sufism and Catholicism. Sayings of this kind, which reflect an individual's response to and conception of the system of thought in which he lives, obviously have a strong tinge of what today is called existential meaning. But the pleasure and illumination we would derive from a compilation of such sayings or

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legends should not mislead us into thinking that they represent the actual teaching of Sufism or Catholicism, whose more dogmatic features would be apt to get blurred in a presentation of this character. And that is precisely the case with Buber's selection of Hasidic material. These legends and sayings are certainly impressive and they certainly possess a general human appeal, but to understand what they actually meant in their original context, one still has to go back to the primary sources which Buber has declared to be merely secondary. We shall presently see how important this original context is in discussing the most fundamental point in Buber's interpretation of Hasidism. As a man of letters—even as the preacher of a message—we willingly grant Buber the right to choose as he pleases, whatever ambiguity his choice may entail. However, such a choice will not serve him in making out a scholarly case for a true understanding of what most appeals to him in the phenomenon of Hasidism.

TO BE SURE, there is some truth in Buber's idea of the relation between Hasidism and Cabbala. While the Hasidim never lost or foresook their enthusiasm for the teachings of the Zohar and the Lurianic Cabbala, and while no page of a Hasidic book can be understood without constant reference to these traditions, at the same time the Hasidic writers were not particularly creative in elaborating the theosophical points of Cabbalism, and all students of Hasidism are agreed that it is not here that their most valuable contribution lies. They use the old formulas, terms, and ideas, adding only a new twist. Thus Buber is right in saying that gnostic theologumena when taken over by Hasidism are transformed. Into what are they transformed? Into statements about man and his way to God. Cabbalistic terminology which originally referred to divine mysteries is interpreted by the Hasidic writers as referring also to values of the personal life of man and his relation to God, and great emphasis is placed on this "moral" reading of the old vocabulary. In the writings of Rabbi Baer of Mezritch—the 18th-century pupil of the Baal-Shem who actually organized the movement—we find a whole string of pages where Cabbalistic terms are almost systematically taken up with a view to explaining what they mean if understood as guiding principles in the personal life of the devotee. They are not robbed of their original meaning, which indeed continues to play its part; rather they acquire an additional one.

This far we can agree with Buber, but again he overstates his point in opposing the ideal of the Cabbalist initiated into the mysteries of God to that of the simple man who lacks gnostic and rabbinic knowledge but has achieved a "unity" in his life. This seems to be a false alternative. The Cabbalists never excluded the possibility of a simple unlearned person achieving the highest spiritual perfection, nor did Hasidism set up this kind of simple man as its highest ideal. He may appear here and there in Hasidic legend (which in this respect has absorbed a much older Jewish folk-tradition), but Hasidic teaching says nothing about his representing the highest ideal to be achieved by following the call. On the contrary, it never tires of expounding its doctrine of the necessary interrelation between the truly spiritual man—who is always seen as a gnostic initiate—and the simple people: only by binding themselves to their common roots can these two kinds of men arrive at the true Hasidic community, which needs them both. The Hasidic legends honoring the faith of the unlettered believer are essentially the same as are found in all religions, and only rarely do they throw light on the specific scale of values which Hasidic literature held up to be followed, and on the ways it prescribed for achieving communion with God. This latter concern—the achieving of communion with God—is the core of Hasidism.

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BUT LET US proceed to the main point. I agree with Buber when he says: "What Hasidism strives for as regards the Cabbala is the de-schematization of the mystery. The old-new principle that it represented is, restored in purified form, that of the cosmic-metacosmic power and responsibility of man. 'All worlds depend on his works, all gaze at and long for the teaching and the good deeds of man.' This principle, by virtue of the pure intensity of Hasidism, became a religious *meeting* . . . a center of a life force and of a community."* The notion that *man's action constitutes a meeting with* God is certainly, and quite rightly, central to Buber's point of view. It takes on enormous dimensions in his Hasidic writings, but is the meaning he gives to it a true representation, as he claims, of the very heart of Hasidism?

Hasidism does indeed teach that man meets God in the concreteness of his activity within the world. What do the Hasidim understand by this? According to the great myth of exile and redemption which is Lurianic Cabbalism, "sparks" of divine life are exiled all over the world and long to be "lifted up" by the actions of man and restored to their proper place in the divine harmony of being. This Cabbalistic myth—whose details are too complicated to be spelled out here†—is probably the most important heritage Hasidism took over from Cabbalism. The upshot of the many variations on the myth was that since these holy sparks were supposed to be everywhere without exception, Hasidism denied in principle the existence of a purely secular sphere in life of no significance to the religious task of man. What appears to be profane and without relevance to religion, in fact contains a specific religious demand on man. Everywhere there is an opportunity, nay a necessity, for "uplifting," and everywhere there lurks the danger of failure. Thus religion is not a beaten track in a circumscribed sphere. New paths open up wherever one looks, and God is at the end of every path. The contemplative mind discovers the "spark" in every sphere of life and thereby turns the profane into something of immediate religious significance.

The formula for this mood was provided by Proverbs 3:6, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him," which the Hasidim interpreted to mean: by every action in which you are engaged you may come to know God, you may be meeting him. As a matter of fact, the Talmud itself (Berakhoth 63a) calls this verse "a small thing on which all the fundamentals of the Torah depend." Some medieval commentators tried to sidetrack this principle by applying it rather narrowly, but Hasidism, in its own mystical way, restored it to its full significance. Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz is credited with the following remark: "How then is it possible to know God in *all* ways? It is, because when God gave the Torah, the whole universe was filled with Torah. There is thus nothing which does not contain Torah, and this is the meaning of the verse. And whoever says that the Torah is one thing and the secular sphere of life [*millei di-alma*] is another, is a heretic." Since the beginnings of Hasidism this doctrine has always been considered one of its basic principles.

Special emphasis was laid by the Hasidic writers on precisely those "forgotten" fields of "simple" activity, the transformation of which into media of holy worship was one of the most refreshing aspects of the movement. True to their innate radicalism—and it is as radicals that the Hasidim have come down in the history of Judaism—they were not afraid of paradoxical statements of their position. "Small talk with one's fellow can be the vehicle of deep meditation," says the Baal-Shem. "The cardinal principle in religious worship," says another

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* *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*, p. 124.

† For a fuller exposition, see Professor Scholem's article, "Jewish Messianism and the Idea of Progress," in the April 1958 COMMENTARY—ED.

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Hasidic leader, "is to serve Him through profane, or material, things." "Even by political conversation and talk about the wars of the gentile nations [the *ne-plus-ultra* of insignificance and wasted time in the eyes of non-Hasidic moralists of the period!] may a man be able to attain communion with God," said a third. And this last is not a simple overstatement—the author of it gives detailed advice on how to perform the feat. The Rabbi of Polnoye, the pupil of the Baal-Shem, sums it all up: "There is no great or small thing isolated from God, for He is immanent in all being. Therefore, the perfect man can perform the deepest meditations and acts of unification even through his most earthly actions, such as eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, and business transactions." The contemplative acts of mystical concentration, called *Yihudim* in Cabbalistic parlance, are no longer performed in solitude and retreat from the world, but rather in the market-place and in supposedly non-spiritual areas. It is here that the true Hasid finds the perfect stage for a perfectly paradoxical achievement.

BUT IS THE achievement really paradoxical? At this point we come face to face with the main principle of Buber's interpretation of Hasidism. The doctrine which I have just expounded is a fact. But how is it to be understood? What kind of contact with the concrete reality of things does man achieve through the lifting up of the holy sparks, according to this radically mystical theory? Does he achieve communion with the concrete in its actual concreteness—with, that is to say, "life as it is"? In using this phrase, I am quoting Buber who says with much clarity and conviction that Hasidism "kindled its followers to joy in the world as it is, *in life as it is,* in every hour of life in this world as that hour is," and that it taught a "constant, undaunted, and exalted joy in the Here and Now."

This far-reaching thesis constitutes the basis of Buber's existentialist interpretation of Hasidism as a perfect realization of the Here and Now, and I think we can gain a better understanding of the truly dialectical nature of Hasidic teaching by considering what makes the thesis so questionable. In some sense, Hasidism does of course know of joy and of the affirmation of reality—a fact which has never escaped the attention of the many writers on Hasidism. But Hasidic doctrine, which seems to me very far from what Buber takes it to be, is ambiguous on this point. The ambiguity is clearly visible in the turn which the Hasidic writers gave to the Cabbalistic doctrine of the uplifting of the sparks, and I wish to formulate it as precisely as possible.

The doctrine of the uplifting of the sparks by human activity means that there is indeed an element in reality with which man can, and should, establish a positive communion, but the liberation or realization of this element simultaneously *annihilates* reality insofar as "reality" signifies (as it does for Buber) the Here and Now. For the "undaunted and exalted joy" which Hasidism certainly did demand of its followers is *not* a joy in the Here and Now. In joy—or let me say in doing whatever he does in full concentration—man communes not with the Here and Now itself (as Buber would have it) but with what is *hidden* in the negligible garment of the Here and Now. Buber's joy in life as it is and in the world as it is—this strikes me as a rather modern idea, and I am bound to say that I find the Hasidic *dicta* expressive of quite a different mood. They do not teach us to enjoy life as it is; rather do they advise—nay enjoin—man to extract, I may even say distill, the perpetual life of God out of life as it is. This extracting must be an act of abstraction. It is not the fleeting Here and Now that is to be enjoyed but the everlasting unity and presence of Transcendence. Of course, it is precisely this notion of abstraction in joy and in the uplifting of the sparks to which Buber's

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interpretation of Hasidism takes exception. For it would go against the essence of his interest in Hasidism as an anti-Platonic, existentialist teaching. Buber says: "Here where we stand, the hidden divine life should be made to shine." This formula conveys true Hasidic teaching, but with an ambiguity of which Buber's reader would not be aware. For in the very act of making the hidden life shine through, we destroy the Here and Now, instead of—as Buber wishes—realizing it in its full concreteness.

Buber's statement, interestingly enough, is to be found almost word for word in Cabbalistic writers such as Moses Cordovero, and is a gnostic thesis whose meaning Hasidic teaching did not alter in the least. "If you see a beautiful woman"—says Rabbi Baer of Mezritch—"do not think of her beauty in its concrete, palpable shape [that is to say, as it exists in the Here and Now] but abstract from its concrete reality and concentrate your mind on the divine beauty that shines through the concrete phenomenon. Then you will no longer behold the beautiful and tempting Here and Now which is this woman, but the ideal and everlasting quality of beauty which is one of God's attributes, and from this you will proceed to contemplate the source of all beauty, namely God." *Dicta* of this kind are legion in Hasidic literature. They use the concrete meeting of man and reality in order to transcend reality, not to fulfill it. And their truly Platonic ring sounds rather different from Buber's glorification of the Here and Now. The Here and Now is transcended and vanishes when the divine element makes its appearance in contemplation, and the Hasidim were tireless in pointing this moral.

MOREOVER, THE HASIDIC conception of the ultimate realization of the concrete contains an essential element of *destruction* which I fail to notice in Buber's analysis. The Baal-Shem and his followers, however, were perfectly well aware of it. I should like to quote only one characteristic saying of the Baal-Shem to make my point clear.

> Once [reports Rabbi Wolf of Zhitomir] the Baal-Shem asked one of the outstanding sages of his generation in regard to prayer: "How do you behave and where do your thoughts turn when praying?" He replied: "I unite with all the individual vitality that there is within created things. For in every thing that comes to be created, there must be a vital force which derives from the divine emanation. I unite with them when speaking my words before God to make my prayer penetrate up into the highest regions." Said the Baal-Shem to him: "If that is what you do, you are destroying the world because in draining off the vitality of things you leave their concrete individuality without their vital force." Said the man: "But how is it possible that I could drain off their vital force by uniting with them?" Answered the Baal-Shem: "Your question shows that your prayer is of little account, since you do not believe that by your prayer you have the power to lift up from them what is their vital capacity."

Here, then, we have the clear-cut and radical thesis which frequently recurs in Hasidic teaching: the complete and final realization of communion has a destructive quality. And the solution which the Baal-Shem offers shows the dialectical character of communion and lifting up. He says that this realization is only a momentary one which must not last. One draws out the vital force, but at the same moment one draws it in again. Or, as many Hasidic writers like to say, one reduces it to nothingness and thereby restores it. This is plainly an esoteric action, and it is called so in so many words by the Baal-Shem—for all that Buber believes that esotericism was renounced by Hasidism. Nor does this action amount, as Buber claims, to the realization of the concrete in all its concreteness. For, as is clearly indicated by the Baal-Shem's words, it is not of the essence of the act itself that it should be discontinued. The

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need to discontinue is only accidental, caused by man's decision to desist, or by his weakness and incapacity for sustaining his destructive concentration. Consequently, such concentration is calculated to empty concrete things of their concreteness rather than filling them to capacity with concrete being, as Buber would have it. We might say that the dialogue reported by the Hasidic writer could well-nigh have been a dialogue between the Baal-Shem and Buber.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE against Buber's existentialist interpretation can be found throughout the classics of Hasidism, the writings of the great pupils of the Baal-Shem, where the individual and concrete being or phenomenon, the *pratiyut* or *lebush,* is always treated rather superciliously. The Here and Now indeed presents a supreme opportunity for a meeting between God and man, but such a meeting can only take place when man uncovers another dimension of the Here and Now —an act which makes the "concrete" disappear. The Here and Now of created being is not identical with what shines through it once it has become transparent. To assume such an identity is to contradict genuine Hasidic teaching which makes the awareness of the divine core of being dependent precisely on emptying the concrete phenomenon of its own weight and significance.

In Buber's careful wording this essential difference is always blurred. On the other hand he establishes a distinction between the Platonic raising-up of the concrete into the realm of Ideas and the existential seizing of the holy sparks hidden in all things. But this distinction is by no means as clear-cut in the Hasidic texts as it is with Buber. For the Hasidim, the realization of reality (if I may use the phrase) is a precarious enterprise: reality may break under the strain of such realization as the lifting-up of the sparks implies. It is not the *concrete* reality of things that appears as the result of the mystic's action, but the *messianic* reality in which all things have been restored to their proper place in the scheme of creation and have thus been transfigured. As a matter of fact, the terms reality and concreteness mean something quite different to Buber from what the Hasidim understood by them. He sometimes uses these terms to signify both the realm of the Here and Now and the realm of transfigured being—a circumstance which has tended to confuse the issue raised by his interpretation. Since the Hasidim laid great stress on the point that human activity cannot bring about or reveal the messianic reality (a point which is also blurred in Buber's writings), they were left with prescribing ways for the individual to use the concrete as a vehicle to the abstract and thereby to the ultimate source of being. This may be conventional theology, even if couched in the language of personal religion, and may be much less exciting than the novel interpretation read into it by Buber, but it is still what Hasidism stood for.

For all this, however, one should not underrate the possibility that the doctrine of the lifting up of the sparks was interpreted in practice by many Hasidim in a less dialectical sense than was originally intended. Hasidic theory—as presented by the Baal-Shem himself, the Rabbi of Polnoye, the Maggid of Mezritch, and their most important pupils—never lost its awareness of the destructive implications of the doctrine and tried to devise ways and means to escape its consequences. But the practice, attested to by the complaints on the part of friend and foe alike, was frequently less sophisticated than the theory. To many Hasidim, lifting up the sparks indeed meant living a fuller life: not emptying reality by taking the sparks *away,* but fulfilling it by bringing them *in.* Thus the holy sparks were interpreted not as metaphysical elements of divine being, but as subjective feelings of joy and affirmation projected into man's relation with his environment.

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This, however, is a view dictated not by the theology of the founders of Hasidism but by the mood of some of its followers. And it is of course precisely this kind of popularization or vulgarization which is sometimes reflected in the world of legend, where Buber's simplified view has its relative legitimation. But to call it the message of Hasidism would be wide off the mark.

IN THE PRECEDING remarks I have been dealing in detail with one central point in Buber's interpretation of Hasidism. In analyzing other important concepts we would be faced with the same task of probing into Buber's assertions by referring back to the theoretical literature of Hasidism. We would then find that the curiously vague terms Buber uses are invariably almost Hasidic, but never quite. There could be no better illustration of this than the following quotation: "In the Hasidic message the separation between 'life in God' and 'life in the world,' the primal evil of all 'religion,' is overcome in genuine, concrete unity." This seems to mean that man's responsibility is infinitely more important than the dogmatic formulation of institutional religion. But the fact is that what Buber calls the "primal evil of all religion" is very much at the center of Hasidic teaching. Buber's so-called "concrete unity" is a fictitious one where Hasidism is concerned, for "life in the world" is no longer life in the world when its divine origins appear in contemplation, thereby transforming it into "life in God." I have still to discover a passage in Hasidic writings that does not maintain the basic separation that Buber so resents. The fact, of course, is—to put it bluntly—that Buber is a religious anarchist (a term that is not meant to disparage him; I am an anarchist myself, though not one of Buber's persuasion), and his doctrine is religious anarchism, which does not acknowledge any teaching about *what* should be done but puts the whole emphasis on intensity, on *how* whatever one does is done. Therefore, references to the Torah and the Commandments, which to the Hasidim still meant everything, become extremely nebulous in Buber's presentation. It is true that Jewish mysticism, by a certain theory of the meaning of Revelation, expands the domain to which the Torah as a set of values refers, but it is still Torah, and that separation of which Buber speaks so disparagingly is still maintained. Where the separation is overcome it is overcome at the cost of the "life in the world," as is clearly shown by the saying of Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz quoted above.

Buber's interpretation stresses the uniqueness of the task confronting every single individual. "All men have access to God, but each in a way that is all his own" *(Der Weg des Menschen)*. This is indeed true, but it is not a novelty introduced by Hasidism. On the contrary, the idea comes originally from the Lurianic Cabbala—that is to say, from that very gnosis at which Buber looks askance. It holds that each individual is enjoined to lift up the holy sparks specifically belonging to his own spiritual root in the great soul of Adam (which is the common soul of mankind), each according to the particular place he once had in Adam's soul. All Hasidism did was to formulate this theory in a popular way, thereby giving it a more personal turn.

Another instance of the peculiar vagueness in Buber's use of Hasidic terms is the way he employs the word *Yihud*. In both Cabbalistic and Hasidic parlance *Yihud* means a contemplative act through which man binds himself to the spiritual element by concentrating his mind on the holy letters of the Torah, which is also the holy book of nature. Buber's contention is that in Hasidism *Yihud* is no longer a magical formula or procedure as it was in Cabbalism. "It is nothing else than the ordinary life of man, but concentrated and aimed at unity as its goal." There may be other *Yihudim,* after the old fashion, but (says Buber) they never so much as touch the center of Hasidic doc-

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trine. Yet I am bound to say that I am unable to find any new shade of meaning in the Hasidic usage of the term. There are always two meanings to *Yihud* in the older literature, and they have undergone no change in the Hasidic texts. The first derives from the Cabbalists and always signifies some special meditation attached to a particular action, a meditation by which one unites oneself to some spiritual reality—to the soul of a holy man or its sparks, to a name of God or a divine attribute. (In this usage, the term also signifies the result achieved by such meditation.) The second meaning of *Yihud,* however, derives above all from Bachya ibn Pakuda's ethical work, *The Duties of the Heart,* where it refers to the directing of one's mind or one's action toward God. In this sense, the term is used only in the singular. Used in the plural, it can only have the Cabbalistic meaning, which has to do with contemplation exclusively and not with the concrete unity of human life achieved by the intensity of concentration, as Buber would have it. The *Yihudim* (plural) are achieved by contemplative communion *(d'vekut)* with the inwardness of the "letters" which are imprinted into being itself. In all the sayings of the Baal-Shem of which I know, the term is used in this precise and technical sense. Therefore I find Buber's translations of many passages on *Yihud* very modern and suggestive, but scientifically unacceptable.

TO SUM UP, the merits of Buber's presentation of Hasidic sayings and legends are very great indeed and will to a large extent stand the test of time. But the spiritual message he has read into them in his more mature works is too deeply bound up with assumptions that have no root in the texts—assumptions drawn from his own very modern philosophy of religious anarchism. Too much is left out in his presentation of Hasidism, while what has been included is overloaded with highly personal speculations. These may be of a sublime character and they may appeal deeply to the modern mind, but if we are searching for an understanding of the actual phenomenon of Hasidism, both in its grandeur and its decay (which in many ways are bound together), we shall, I am afraid, have to start all over again.

PEARSON E. NEAMAN 1903–1961

We mourn the loss of Pearson E. Neaman who served on the COMMENTARY *Publication Committee from 1956 until his death on August 10. We shall greatly miss his warm encouragement and wise guidance.*

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THEODORE SOLOTAROFF

"ALL THAT CELLAR-DEEP JAZZ"

Henry Miller and Seymour Krim

THE TIMES SEEM to have caught up with Henry Miller, not only in the sexual sophistication that permits the recent publication of *Tropic of Cancer,* but in the further respect of often seeming as disordered and self-destructive as he was claiming modern life to be in the early 1930's. If in 1934, the year of *Cancer*'s publication, it was histrionic to call for and accept the imminent destruction of civilization, Miller has lived on to see his political and social maledictions gain in plausibility, so that he now appears on the scene as a prophet with a certain grisly honor. Moreover, the literary extremism of *Cancer* ties in with the recent revival of the romantic impulse, particularly the more unrestrained attempts to respond to—or swing with—the times. Karl Shapiro's rather frantic introduction to the Grove Press edition of the book suggests some of the reasons why Miller has not only been serving as one of the father figures of the Beat writers but also as a Vergil to more sophisticated writers, like Shapiro himself or Seymour Krim, who, having been brought to an impasse by the modern literary sin of intellectual pride, are following Miller's lead to liberate their creative selves by a journey into their own tropics of cancer.

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In *The World of Sex,* Miller describes the central concern of *Cancer* as being "not with sex, nor with religion, but with the problem of self-liberation." A son of the German-American middle class ("They were painfully clean," he writes in *Tropic of Capricorn.* "Never once had they opened the door which leads to the soul. . . ."), Miller was an employment manager at Western Union until one day when he walked out, determined to alter his life once and for all. A few years later, at the age of thirty-nine, he settled—if that's the word—in Paris, where the expatriate colony, following the crash, had dwindled away to a hard core made up (as George Orwell put it) "partly of genuine artists and partly of scoundrels."

Tropic of Cancer records by a mixed method of narrative and spontaneous notation Miller's more characteristic experiences and meditations during the next two years of liberating himself in the dingy twilight zone of the Montmartre slums. Some of his friends feed him; others put him up if the other half of their bed happens to be vacant. Now and then he stumbles on a good thing—a period of steady work as a proofreader, an affair with a wealthy woman, a few months of living with an open-handed young American. But for the most part he drifts on an empty stomach, his eyes attracted by the "sinister splendor . . . [of] certain leprous streets," his nose lifted resolutely to the rancid odors of poverty, his ears tuned to the gurgling of the urinals, and his mind

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reeling with the impressions of a Brooklyn bohemian amid the ruins of Europe. The assault on Miller's moral sense is no less formidable: one of his jobs involves working for a Hindu who takes particular pleasure in having Henry assist him in the lavatory; he models for lewd pictures; he has a turn living with a homosexual ("I could have forgiven him everything if only he had handed me a decent breakfast!"). To keep a few francs in his pocket, Miller comes to lie, fawn, cheat, steal, pimp, taking it all in an easygoing *ça m'est égal* way.

His discovery that he has a stomach for everything except hunger is accompanied, not unexpectedly, by his discovery that he is an artist, the two being aspects of the same process of freeing the inner man by a complete abandonment of conventional moral norms and social values. As he says in setting forth to describe his situation: "I have no money, no resources, no hopes. I am the happiest man alive. A year ago, six months ago, I thought that I was an artist. I no longer think about it, I *am*."

THE TWO MAIN elements of *Cancer* follow from the development of these two images—Miller the asocial man and Miller the artist—though they are a good deal less integrated than this opening statement presumes. The first results in the scenes from low life, the anecdotes of sordidness and disorder, usually presented in a spare, impassive prose, touched infrequently with joy, but almost invariably with comedy. These are by far the best moments in the book, for Miller is a fine natural writer and storyteller in the deadpan manner, a kind of Left Bank Mark Twain. The few pages in which Miller describes moving his shiftless friend Van Norden from one scurvy rooming house to another, or the narrative of young Fillmore's liaison with a dizzy Russian princess (who has been to the well once too often), are classic evocations of the makeshift, roguish world created by the international flotsam that was being washed up in Paris during the 1930's. And one finds a number of other incidents only slightly below this level.

However, there is also Miller the "artist," and a good half of *Cancer* is occupied by his ingenuous mannerisms and fulminations. If Miller came to Paris too late to cadge a living in the free-spending Paris of the 1920's, he didn't come too late to avoid the foaming aestheticism of surrealism, with its techniques of "unconscious writing," its often facile tilting of psychological and moral norms, and its underlying attitudes, as one critic sums them up, of "an understandable disgust with world conditions, boredom, and the desire of individuals for self-advertisement." From such surrealists as Lautréamont, an early predecessor, and Blaise Cendrars, Miller seems to have found much of his apocalyptic nihilism and primitivism (he describes *Cancer* as not a book but "a prolonged insult, a gob of spit in the face of Art, a kick in the pants to God, Man, Destiny, Time, Love, Beauty. . . ."), as well as the license for his prolonged bouts of manic self-entrancement ("I know that I spring from the mythological founders of the race," and so on). The surrealists also aspired to create an immediate, uninhibited avowal of emotion by capturing those charged images that are released during extreme states of psychic pressure. (As Miller puts it: "My idea briefly has been to present a resurrection of the emotions, to depict the conduct of a human being in the stratosphere of ideas, that is, in the grip of delirium.") Like all extreme romantics, the surrealists were preoccupied with instinctual forms of behavior, and this led them to prize highly those precincts of the social Id, the slums, of which Miller comes to be so enamored. Finally, the surrealists believed that the conventional literary forms were as artificial and deforming as the social and moral ones; this belief, combined with their taste for self-expression in its most exhibitionist and esoteric modes, produced as their charac-

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teristic form a sort of fictional-poetic personal tract. This, too, Miller took over; when, in his pioneering review of *Cancer,* Edmund Wilson wrote of it as a novel, Miller protested to him in a letter: "I don't use 'heroes' . . . nor do I write novels. I am the hero, and the book is myself."

Thus, the surrealist influence on Miller is a strong one, and though it produces a number of remarkable images, it leads more generally to passages of quasi-spontaneous hokum. Many of Miller's friends in Paris were Jews, and he has some very shrewd observations about them. But the "artist" in Miller typically produces the literary speciousness of the following passage:

> For the Jew the world is a cage filled with wild beasts. The door is locked and he is there without whip or revolver. His courage is so great that he does not even smell the dung in the corner. . . . Standing there . . . he finds that the lions do not understand his language. Not one lion has ever heard of Spinoza. Spinoza? Why they can't even get their teeth into him. "Give us meat!" they roar, while he stands there petrified, his ideas frozen, his *Weltanschauung* a trapeze out of reach. A single blow of the lion's paw and his cosmogony is smashed.

Under the surrealist influence, even Miller's sharp little comedies of émigrés hanging on to their fantasies by their fingertips often are weakened by the writer's fantasies about his artistic originality and power. Thus the brilliant description of Van Norden sitting blankly amid the little bundle of junk he carries from one flat to the next, and cheering himself up by complaining of his well-fed satyriasis, suddenly fades into a surrealistic trance, a number of trite Freudian symbols having entered the narrator's mind. Similarly, the faces of other characters, along with certain street scenes, the interiors of bars and houses, are portentously blown up or spitefully contracted into soulful epiphanies or grotesque caricatures. Just as Miller's inflamed "cosmological eye" can see in the "dark unstitched wound" of a prostitute's body a whole liturgy of meanings—from the matrix of all mathematical systems to the crumbling of the modern world—so it can as easily reduce other of his people to a leaking bladder or an insect.

THIS SPLIT IN vision between the actualities of Miller's life in Paris and his highly artificial reveries has two implications that I want to spell out a bit. The first flows from the split in Miller between the rather simple, hardheaded American, with his coarse but honest voice, who is involved in these liberating experiences, and the avant-garde thinker and writer who explores the lusts and cruelties of his heart as well as the splendors and miseries of his imagination. Now this split is no accident, for Miller's celebrated powers of acceptance often seem to rest on the tactic of his withdrawing, under a smokescreen of apocalyptic projections and rationalizations, from the nastier realities that he dredges up about himself. When, for example, he and Van Norden degrade a prostitute by their cold and cynical lust, Miller soon turns his back, in effect, on the crime against life taking place in the bed—their making a human being into a thing—to generalize instead about the coldness and cynicism of modern war. Similarly a great deal of his literary, like his moral, exhibitionism, parading under the attempt to forge an idiom that will allow him "to translate all that is in his heart," works to aggrandize his powers of passion and to evade his coldness—even deadness—of feeling.

In sum, this process of "self-liberation" in Miller's first book (and it becomes progressively more indulgent in *Black Spring, Tropic of Capricorn,* and the later autobiography), demonstrates that using writing in this way can easily lead the writer to the magic of a rhetoric rather than to the resistances of the ego, to his strategies of liberation rather than to the self. The truth is that the ego is far less interested in "self-liberation" than it is in protecting its

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own images and interests; and it has a distinct preference for fantasies, projections, and highly metaphorical styles when the self is being exposed. This is a problem that writers who, like Miller, are bent on "going all the way," frequently succumb to rather than confront, and it is why both the content and the style of *Cancer* often function to evade the self in the process of asserting it. Thus, I end up preferring George Orwell's chaste and impersonally honest chronicle of being down and out in Paris to Miller's more sexually charged but often meretricious self-portrayal.

The other general point that arises from this split in *Cancer* is that in straining to get literature, as Miller says he is, "off the gold standard," it is fatally easy to substitute merely a tin one. The need to rebel and the need for company led him directly into the form of romanticism *in extremis* that was available. And more particularly, they led him to those surrealists who offered him a set of attitudes —indeed a primitivist subject matter— that was disencumbered of the discipline and lucidity essential to the surrealism of Breton, the early Aragon, and Henri Michaux. These writers carefully distorted objective realities to evoke the atmosphere and some of the imagery of revery, but their main interest was in criticizing life in terms of the fantasies that dominated an individual or a society. In so doing they developed a mode of satiric vision that is strongly marked in the work of the other American surrealist of note, Nathanael West.

HOWEVER, IT IS Miller's example rather than West's that seems most characteristically American and that also characterizes the more extreme attempts by writers in recent years both to reassert the role of the self in literature and to engage it with the fantastic tenor of the times. Seymour Krim, who wishes now to "gun out some leveller messages about reality" than he was able to do in his years of writing criticism for COMMENTARY, *Commonweal, Partisan Review,* and *Hudson Review,* states the aim of the "unbugged" writer as follows: "Nothing can speak for itself like what is. . . . The writing I want to do now is inspired by the pertinent, the immediate, the actual of this very minute; that would be sufficient greatness for me if I can give it full voice."* And just as Miller's efforts to make "use of those elements in the air which give direction and motivation to our lives" led him to focus much of the time on his own drives and fantasies, so Krim's essays make use of the same touchstone—that of "extreme consciousness of Self." For, as he writes, "so complex and in many ways unprecedented has urbanized modern life become for the individual that the writer just by owning an 'I' can find more of the traditional stuff of fiction (Dostoevskian drama, Melvillian speculation, Verne-ish fantasy) in personal reality itself than in deliberate invention." Krim's idiom is different from Miller's but it places just as high a premium on rapid metaphorical invention or "spontaneity" in looking for "new colors, new sounds, new equivalents for the extremity to which the Self has been pushed." And finally, he has become preoccupied with the lower depths, which in times of affluence means mainly Negroes, deviants, and mass culture. It is not surprising, then, that Krim should find Miller to be one of his four exemplars of "real personal honesty," "actual American experience," of "the imaginative emancipation of life based on this same ruthless love for what is."

Much of what I have been saying in objection to Miller seems to me even more thoroughly relevant to Krim. However, it is a touchier argument to carry to *Views of a Near-Sighted Cannoneer,* for while *Cancer* leaves me with a certain amount of objective disappointment, Krim's book leaves me depressed, disgusted, or infuriated. This means, purely literary questions to one side, that Krim

* *Views of a Near-Sighted Cannoneer* (Excelsior Press, 128 pp., $1.45).

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has more to say to me than Miller does. Partly this is a matter of the subjects he writes about: the New York intellectual scene, particularly as it involves the problem of writing for certain intellectual magazines; the realities of Negro community life, to which both "white Negroes" and white liberals tend to be equally blinded though in different ways; the attitudes today in America toward mental breakdown and suicide; the problem of writing fiction about a world whose daily life can strike one as more obsessive and portentous than a Kazan movie. These all happen to be matters about which my own knowledge and interest are on the whole as firsthand—that is to say, as complex and painful—as Krim's. Similarly, his essay on "making it"—the new nihilism of our affluent times—his dialogue on the growing social and moral confidence of the homosexual revolt in America, his essay on the teasing sexuality of the mass media: all these involve subjects that relevantly characterize the moral atmosphere in which one lives and breathes today.

Along with being drawn out by Krim because he writes about these things, I also share his point of view in almost every essay: the fact that his manner of thinking and writing is "beat" or "hip" and mine is, as he would probably say, "square," dissolves partly at least in the deeper similarities of background and development, which inevitably confer similarities in attitude. That we both grew up as wayward sons of the Jewish middle class and came of intellectual age in the 1940's is a large point to have in common. Also crucial is the fact that we both tried to become writers during a period when the conditions of the higher literary apprenticeship were as gruelling and distorting as Krim says they were (though this was hardly confined to the New York journals). Until fairly recently only a few models seemed open to "serious" young writers and all involved pretending that one was at least forty-five years old in his politics and in his erudition, and fifty-five in his "tragic sense of life." This made it very hard for someone twenty-five to stay in touch with himself and hence with his times. In the last few years, however, it has become clear that there are certain advantages for one to have come fresh into the postwar world and to rely on his independent sense of it. This, in turn, means trusting that margin of individual, *lived* experience that one shares with his contemporaries and must look to in good part for his point of view and his voice.

ALL OF WHICH is to say, then, that I couldn't agree more with Krim when he tells my generation of writers that we all "face the same problems" and that we "need each other." The main problem, of course, is that to acknowledge that one belongs as an individual and writer to postwar America is mainly to realize that the pounding tensions and amorphousness of its social life, and the low emotional pressures and formalism of its literary norms, are primary facts of one's experience and training. This realization is useful to disabuse one of the notions that our social and moral arrangements are still largely stable and satisfactory ones, and that a settled social vision and self-restraint and arch-subtlety are likely to produce a relevant literature. But in the end, the same realization also leaves one alone with the truth that in questioning the ideological assurances and literary standards of our cultural fathers as increasingly beside the point of contemporary American reality, one has little else besides a massive sense of fluidity. *The Liberal Imagination* or *The Wasteland* or *The Portrait of a Lady* are of little help after the candors of the newsstand or a Sunday evening of watching TV, but what else *is* of help? This is the America one has lived with more intimately and formatively than he has with any ideology—but what then? How to confront, and let into one's writing, the suspicion that the social life we have been led to take for granted is more like the inner life of a psychopath than

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that of a rational society? How, on the other hand, to take into account that countervailing forces operate as well, that one's life is less of a struggle than his parents' was, less culture-bound, less inhibited, less closed of mind? The typical tension produced by accepting this strident, sapping, abundant, imperiled society with our practical reason while doubting it with our deepest intuitions of the good life, merely makes one's personal formulations of what it feels like to be alive today often seem as consistent as the weather.

Now, as I indicated earlier, what partly redeems Miller and also what makes him an interesting and useful writer today is his ability to stand firm, ironic as a peasant, at the extremes of poverty and crudity and disorder, and accept what is happening long enough to get it down as it is, before he takes off on another of his evasive flights of imaginings. Since I agree completely with Krim that our best and most truthful writing today must involve "the extreme to which the Self has been pushed by contemporary reality," I am that much more impressed by Miller's ability to often confront "the extreme" in a cool and steady way. For all his fantasy and pretension, there is a hard center to Miller which remains, in good part, detached from his egomania and from the pressure of events, and which allows him to capture a solid feeling of reality. Krim, on the other hand, for all his courageous candor and assertiveness, keeps reveling in a self and a sense of the world that are shaky to the core.

Here, for example, Krim is talking about the most important event he finds in his own life, his break from the confinements of the New York intellectual scene:

> It wasn't until I was 33 . . . not until I spewed up every hunk of undigestible matter in my psyche and bloodily broke through to my own raw meat via the whistling rocket-ride of what is called insanity—that I began to think for myself because I had to. Man, this wasn't any bullshit about beautiful words and dream-masterpieces anymore—this was life and death and all that cellar-deep jazz!

Here, he is talking about non-conformist thought in America:

> There is much reason to think that America has reached such a point of ultimate no-return in making its world-play, that ununionized free-thinkers could easily be sacrificed today to the national destiny; our head-on position in history blushes steel and warships to permit embarrassingly free beatnik snooping into every uneasy pocket of existence; we are in the spotlight of the globe and no finks are wanted to spoil the picture.

THE OBVIOUS TROUBLE in both cases is that Krim is less concerned with exploring an insight into himself or the society that impinges on him, than he is in exhibiting himself as a very hip, very imaginative, very candid writer, one who writes directly from the guts and the nerve-ends. As such his efforts and mistakes are largely Miller's, only weaker and more complete: the notion that one arrives at personal and social truth by applying a pressure pump to one's feelings, which creates false emphasis; the idea that self-discovery is merely the willingness to lay one's personality on the line, which creates evasions; and the notion that the *Zeitgeist* requires an entirely new set of liberated attitudes and modes of expression, which means merely dressing up in one of the new forms of extreme romanticism—in Krim's case, that of the Beats.

As in Miller, the exhibitionism often functions as a cover-up—a way of writing about ego-threatening matters by a rhetoric that detaches them from a full range of inner response, and buries uncertainty under a discharge of worked-up feeling. For beneath what Norman Mailer chooses to call Krim's "odd honest garish sober [*sic*] grim surface," one senses the fluidity of a writer who is unable to allow the truth of his experience to speak for itself,

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who can possess his insights only by doing violence to them, either by word or idea, who believes in his own voice only when he is posturing with it. The writer who speaks of a "life and death" confrontation as so much "cellar-deep jazz" is not merely affecting what Krim calls a "swinging" style; the rhetoric throughout the first passage quoted is also a way of sliding past any meaningful engagement with that world of the self that Krim tells us he has given up everything to write about. And this is also true of "The Insanity Bit," which is much less about what it means to have an emotional breakdown today than it is about experiencing "the sheer ecstasy of 100 per cent uninhibitedness" and then having to pay for it at the hands of a repressive society.

Similarly, when he formulates the very real and very subtle problem of dissent in America by announcing that the beatniks are in danger of being liquidated in the interest of our foreign relations, I begin to see much the same necessary flashiness of formulation and much the same desperate pathos of uncertainty driven to total assertion. Similarly, when Krim tells me that the mass media have released a stream of sexuality "which has eaten into all American life . . . which has savaged through my tiny literary life and your Plymouth-hustling life. . . ." And similarly, when he has to attack the New York literary pundits for their impossibly high and false standards by suggesting that these led to his own crack-up and to the premature deaths of Isaac Rosenfeld, Robert Warshow, James Agee, Weldon Kees, and William Poster.

THE FACT IS that behind each of these compulsively extreme, compulsively souped-up characterizations of himself or of his world, one detects a baffled but adaptable figure of our times, now looking for a home in the Village among the Jewish intellectuals, now for one in Harlem, finally for one among the Beats; forcing the underlying tractability to flow this year into the channels of COMMENTARY, next year of *Hudson Review*, and eventually, and with no less forcing, into the brassy pipes of the new demi-underground that run from the *Village Voice* to *Swank*. Having made all the literary scenes, as they say, of the past twenty years, Krim seems now to be compressing his protean ambition and intelligence into a new take-off after the *Zeitgeist*: *"Survival at its highest conception means making it! To live you must conquer if you're normal enough to hate being stuck with your futile being and smart enough to know you must trade it for success!"*

So perhaps, then, Krim is finally breaking through to bedrock, to the naked ego drives he spends most of the other essays evading by half-confessions, half excuses: "my innocence was raped (willingly)"; "as a man I was self-deceptive, self-indulgent. . . . Ah, the extraordinary mismating of thoughts in the mind of the modern American literary romantic . . ." and so on. But the point remains that Krim is still writing as much for his "ego's bread" as he ever did in writing fancy criticism and is mainly using the very real need for more self-awareness and less academicism to put himself under a new spell.

As Harold Rosenberg has noted, the world of the convert changes, not his character. At present, in the vestments of the hip, self-liberated writer, Krim lives in a world where suicides are "stubborn amateur Hamlets and Ophelias" who "unconsciously reclaim their humanity and even ours"; where "fiction [is] much less relevant to today's actuality than the more universal story of sheer being"; where "change only occurs . . . when we stand against the ultimate wall and realize that there is no place else to go except in a totally opposite direction"; where the "pioneering 'psychotic' is the human poet of the future"; and where "*Baby, there is no significance today but YOU.*" As I have said, there's a sector of one's awareness of life today in which these assump-

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tions make a certain amount of sense. But in the total ambiance of *Views,* they also mark the end of the line in the opposite direction from the restraints of "objectivity" and "impersonality": they seem less ideas than symptoms of the recklessness, self-righteousness, flatulence, panic, and compulsiveness of a writer who in freeing himself of inhibition has also left himself with practically no conception of "otherness" with which to correct and connect with his self-preoccupations.

The pity of it is that Krim is in a first-rate position and has the perceptiveness and zeal to become one of the moral historians of the past twenty years. One essay stands out in this collection, in which Krim argues that many whites who take and imitate Negro life in terms of its jazz have "literally no idea of the conditions of life that lie behind this music." Here Krim avoids trafficking in his self-apologetics, inside dopesterism, and facile lingo, and writes with the clarity and sincerity of a man whose point is too meaningful to risk misunderstanding or require false emphasis.

So too are his points about the narrowing and unnerving literary standards of the past fifteen years; about the mixed reactions of a white in Harlem; about the cult of genius in the American mentality; about the causes behind the new wave of personalism and irrationalism in the novel. But in each case one is left not with a truth but with the same overflowing 8th Street cocktail, one part bile, one part blood, and one part corn.

Coming back to my original point, what *Views* finally dramatizes is, in Krim's own words, that "increasing chasm which separates intelligent people from understanding each other." This polarization of attitudes is very real today and my criticism of Krim is part of it; for in the end I am driven back by reading him in the direction of those genteel, authoritarian souls who write supernaturally smug essays about the Beats. But is the soft, indulgent, hysterical element in Henry Miller an answer to the common problems of our generation of writers? And, in effect, isn't Krim himself failing this generation by confusing it with a coterie, by falsifying its consciousness with frantic and whining exaggerations, and by adding his watery extremism to the general fluidity that threatens to swamp us all?

IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES

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GEORGE LICHTHEIM

THE BRITISH WAY OF LIFE— AND THE COMMON MARKET

LONDON, SEPTEMBER

GREAT EVENTS DO NOT invariably occur to the accompaniment of thunderous displays of passion; not at any rate in Britain. The declaration of war on Germany in 1939 was reported by the London *Times* under the normal double-column headline reserved for all major transactions. The British government's more recent decision to enter Western Europe, even if it means relinquishing a sizable part of Britain's economic and political sovereignty, was announced in the same matter-of-fact spirit, and the country so far has responded by keeping a tight rein on its emotions. Some tears are being shed, but mostly off-stage. Enthusiasm, too, is at a discount, possibly because the pro-Europeans fear to upset their countrymen by too loud a demonstration of triumph. The fact remains that the government and Parliament are now morally committed to an enterprise comparable to the introduction of Free Trade in 1846: a historic operation which then achieved the two-fold result of securing Britain's industrial predominance, and ruining the Conservative party for a generation. Memories are long among the Tories, and pessimists are not lacking who believe that Macmillan will be remembered with that reluctant convert to Free Trade, Robert Peel, as a Tory leader who sacrificed his party to what he conceived to be the common good. The Opposition prefers to regard him as another Ramsay Macdonald.

Historians and students of national behavior had their expectations confirmed when the formal motion to join the European Common Market was introduced in the House of Commons on August 2. Parliament rose to the occasion by providing a forum for a restrained and dignified debate, while the *Times* on the following morning was its usual dead-pan self. Its parliamentary report carried a special rubric headlined (across one column) "Prime Minister States His Case." Noting that "Mr. Harold Macmillan, Prime Minister (Bromley, C.), rising to some Ministerial cheers, moved the Government motion," it quoted him as saying *inter alia*:

> We must all agree that the problems involved in the future of our relations with Europe are among the most difficult and the most important that the nation has ever had to face. The moment of decision, however, has not yet come. What the House is now asked to do is support the Government's proposal to initiate negotiations on the Common Market within the terms of the motion. When these negotiations are completed, one way or the other, the House will have to pass judgment.

Not exactly a trumpet call. The entire speech, in fact, gave the impression that the government was edging forward at a speed determined by that of the slowest ships in the convoy: British agriculture, certain Commonwealth countries (notably Australia), and a grumbling mass of Conservative back-benchers. The Opposition was equally loath to display enthusiasm for this venture in Europeanism. Gaitskell's speech was lauded as a skillful tactical performance. It probably helped to cement Labor party unity, but at the cost of stubborn fence-sitting. It also disappointed the keener

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"Europeans" in the party, who on every other issue had hitherto functioned as Gaitskell's personal bodyguard. Still, unlike Lord Attlee (Clement Attlee that was), Gaitskell did not go so far as to express rooted distrust of Continental Europeans in general; nor on the other hand did he follow Lord Morrison (better known as Herbert Morrison) in advocating support for the government's move. Labor's left wing, as represented on this occasion by the veteran Emanuel Shinwell, took an even dimmer view of the whole business.

The truth is that, apart from the Liberals, no one is very keen on going into Europe. The Liberals, however, are influential, and in an indirect way more numerous than they appear to be. The *Economist* (which has a vested interest in the matter) even claims that they number some four hundred out of over six hundred members of the present Parliament: namely the bulk of center-left Laborites and most of the Conservatives. This is probably an over-estimate, but it contains an element of truth. Neither of the two great parties is in very good shape at the moment, and intellectual leadership has been slipping to the extra-parliamentary forces represented by the great Liberal organs of opinion, such as the *Economist,* the Sunday *Observer,* and the Manchester *Guardian.* The point was put rather maliciously by an observer who remarked that whereas the Labor party no longer believed in socialism, the Tories had merely lost their faith in the (nonexistent) Empire. This leaves the Liberals in possession, if not of Free Trade (which few of them really believe in), at least of free European trade. And since they have long had a stranglehold on the universities, the upper ranks of the civil service (especially the Treasury), the highbrow papers, and the BBC, it is comparatively easy for them to put their case across. Even so, their victory over entry into Europe leaves something to be desired in terms of popularity, for it is clear that the move has been sprung upon a reluctant nation by a government only recently converted to the cause. Characteristically, the Sunday *Observer,* a tireless vehicle of pro-European propaganda, headlined its commentary on Macmillan's speech with the sardonic question: "Did he jump or was he pushed?" Both right-wing Tories and left-wing Socialists affect to believe that the jump was at any rate preceded by some determined pushing on the part of President Kennedy.

II

WESTERN EUROPE, as the British public is beginning to discover, aims at something more than economic union. But economics nonetheless is the hard core—or if one prefers it, the material foundation—of the whole enterprise. Technically, the present negotiations concern not the future political unification of Europe, but simply the European Economic Community established by the Treaty of Rome, or in current parlance, the Common Market. Something must therefore be said about this elaborate contraption before moving on to wider considerations.

The Treaty of Rome—signed on March 25, 1957, by France, West Germany, Italy, Holland, Belgium, and Luxemburg, representing a combined population of some 170 million—stipulates as its basic purpose the removal of economic barriers between the six countries and the establishment of a common external tariff: both aims to be achieved in twelve to fifteen years, though by now the target date has been informally advanced to 1970. Quotas are to disappear, capital and labor are to move freely, and ultimately the whole area is to become a single economic unit. Internal tariffs between the Six have already been cut by 30 per cent, with another 10–20 per cent cut due next January. Since London has so far taken no part in these moves, it follows that British tariffs must be slashed by 40–50 per cent if the country is to qualify for membership by January 1963: now regarded as the most likely date of entry.

The pressure to join these arrangements arises quite simply from the fact that since 1958 the Six have begun to unify their common *external* tariff against the outside world (including Britain). This means that low-tariff countries such as West Germany, Holland, and Belgium, who are among Britain's best customers, have started to raise their tariffs against British goods, at the same time as they are reducing them against France and Italy. When all is said and done, this single economic factor has been the spearhead of the drive to make the United

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Kingdom enter the Common Market: staying out would in the long run prove more painful than getting in. Discrimination against British products is not yet very serious, but at the end of the transitional period (i.e., by 1970) the common external tariff would be 15 to 25 per cent for most products (29 per cent for cars), while internal tariffs would be zero. Western Europe would then have become a customs union from which British exports would be effectively excluded, since most British production lines compete with similar Continental ones. There would also of course be some discrimination against American goods, but the U.S. can stand it; Britain cannot.

The Common Market, moreover, is not merely very large but also very dynamic. Of late it has been the most dynamic growth area in the Western world, leaving both the United States and the British Commonwealth panting behind. This remarkable expansion started indeed several years before the Six got together, and is not confined to them: it is just as marked in Scandinavia and Switzerland. But the Six are the center of the whole Western European area, and their success has resulted in a flow of American investment capital trying to get in on the ground floor (and behind the external tariff wall). Europe's postwar boom has been fed by many factors, including the Marshall Plan, the discovery of new raw materials (especially natural gas), a greater supply of new skilled labor, and last but not least the introduction of something like long-term economic planning by the various governments. By accelerating the boom and orienting it toward the historic center of Western Europe, the Common Market has added an extra dynamic of its own, which has now proved strong enough to overcome Britain's traditional resistance to European integration.

It is possible to argue that all this merely confirms an already established tendency for the focus of West European trade to be increasingly concentrated around the Atlantic Ocean terminal complex: London, Southampton, Rotterdam, Hamburg, Antwerp, Rouen, and le Havre; with an industrial hinterland extending to Birmingham, Paris, the Ruhr, and Milan; and to conclude that the commercial growth of this great nexus makes participation necessary, unless Britain chooses to be left out. But of course such a decision, though irrational, is not in principle inconceivable. Historic entities—whether city-states or nation-states—have been known to cling to short-term advantages. Venice resisted Italian unification as long as it could, preferring splendid ruination to comfortable domestic bliss. Conceivably the British might make a similar choice. The fact that they have currently opted for the rational solution is a cause for congratulation just because it was *not* inevitable.

The parallel with Venice is less farfetched than it might seem. Leaving aside the more obvious points of comparison, of which thinking people in England are only too conscious, there is a tradition of proud insularity which in recent years has shaded off into an almost neurotic introspectiveness on the part of the public, and a determined hankering after "greatness" on the part of the Establishment. On the Continent it was long thought that the British government not merely doubted the success of the Common Market, but was positively hostile to it. Indeed there are still influential people in Brussels—the seat of the European Economic Commission, which is the real executive of the Common Market—who in their hearts believe that this hostility has been merely transferred to the political aspects of the Treaty of Rome. In these quarters it is suspected that in moving to join the Common Market, Whitehall is more determined than ever to wreck the drive for European political unification. If these suspicions should prove well-founded, there is the certainty of a first-class row in the not very distant future, for the European movement is powerful and growing. However, the row would presumably take place after Britain had joined, and would then have the character of a family affair. What matters at the moment is whether the British may not after all find the price of joining too high even in economic terms.

WHY SHOULD THERE be a price at all? During the past five years British sales to the Common Market countries have increased at nearly twice the average rate, and in 1960 the area absorbed 15 per cent of Britain's total exports. Even more significant, sales to the Six expanded five times as fast

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as exports to the Commonwealth, though the latter still accounts for some 45 per cent of the United Kingdom's over-all trade. The comparison is between a large, secure, but relatively stagnant market, and a smaller but more dynamic one. Moreover, Britain's application for entry into the Common Market has already stimulated a similar move by her trading associates among the Outer Seven (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland, Portugal); not to mention the so-called "forgotten four" (Spain, Ireland, Iceland, Turkey); plus Greece, which has already become an associate member, and Israel, which is trying to become one. At this rate most of Western Europe will have become an economically unified area by 1970 or thereabouts, with Britain located near the center of a vast market of some 300 million customers. It would seem at first sight that this should be a cause for worry chiefly for the United States, who are currently sending a quarter of their total exports to Western Europe and will have to face tariff discrimination, as well as increased competition in other markets. Yet Washington has long favored the Common Market and declared itself ready to accept some measure of discrimination as the price of greater European unity, whereas London has hitherto shown the greatest reluctance to come to terms with the Six.

The snag is that entry into Western Europe means (a) dismantling Britain's high-tariff structure in industry and (b) doing without tariff-free food imports from the Commonwealth. These measures may well result in a 10 per cent rise in retail prices of food, while at the same time knocking a number of ailing industries on the head. All forecasts are speculative, but there is no getting away from the fact that a common external tariff means the end of the present regime whereby most foodstuffs enter Britain duty-free. The Common Market implies a common external tariff for food, which will automatically work in favor of European farmers and against Commonwealth producers in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and West Africa. It also means the end of the present system whereby the cost of farm subsidies is borne by the taxpayer, artificial price supports being ruled out by the Treaty of Rome. It may be said that doing away with subsidies is going to save the taxpayer a lot of money, but the taxpayer and the consumer are not necessarily the same person. Worried Laborites are already making use of the argument that the working-class housewife will have to bear the cost of higher food prices in the shops to compensate the farmer, while middle-class taxpayers are likely to benefit from the considerable saving in state subsidies.

On top of this there is the virtual certainty that when the high British tariff on manufactures comes down, a whole range of sheltered industries (with textiles and other consumer goods in the lead) are going to feel the chill—possibly to the extent of contracting pneumonia. It is all very well—so the argument goes—for the industrial giants (steel, chemicals, and motors) to be philosophical about European competition, but what about the small firm which has hitherto kept going behind the tariff wall? The sound of the Common Market trumpet is already causing panic among medium-scale producers long sheltered from competition by the British customs barrier—the highest in Europe. What is to happen to these worthy citizens and their employees when protection is taken off? And what may not happen to such cherished British foibles as driving on the left side of the road (though the progressive Swedes share this habit), or reckoning pounds, shillings, and pence according to a duodecimal system which is likely to be among the casualties of unification? Are there not indeed already some Jacobins who would like to do away with the ancient rigmarole of weights and measures as well, and substitute the metric system originally invented by the godless French during their Revolution? And has there not for long been a conspiracy in advanced progressive circles to employ the Common Market (and the increased tourist traffic) as a means of subverting that venerable institution, the British Sunday? It is easy to see that on the heels of a customs union, and in the guise of economic unification, the country might be inundated by foreign heresies hitherto kept at arm's length. The possibilities are endless. Even the time-honored distinction between British and foreign passengers at Dover is likely to go by the board. However, none of these fears weighs heavily in the balance compared with less palpable considerations.

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III

WILL BRITAIN'S ENTRY into Europe mean the end of Commonwealth preferences for British exports, and ultimately of the Commonwealth itself? Will it endanger Britain's farmers? Must the entire Treaty of Rome be renegotiated? How would Britain's tariff (higher toward third countries than the Common Market tariff, lower toward the Commonwealth) be weighted in the final average? Should tariffs between the Six and new members be cut at one fell swoop by 50 per cent, or, say, in two stages of 25 per cent each? How many votes would Britain have on the European Commission, and could they—together perhaps with the votes of new entrants such as Denmark—block the adoption of measures for which two-thirds majorities are required? Are the French going to veto Britain's entry unless they get their way during the negotiations, and if they don't, are they going to form a voting bloc with the Germans and Italians to steam-roller British opposition when the new European institutions are set up? Can Nigeria, Ghana, and the other ex-British territories in Africa be given associate status, and if they stay out, is Dr. Nkrumah going to make even more trouble throughout Africa?

All these are important questions of which the public will hear a great deal during the coming months. None touches the heart of the matter. Even if they could all be resolved to Britain's satisfaction, there would still be opposition to joining on the part of those who fear the loss of national traditions, or of freedom for a future British government to establish socialism. Not to mention the people—more numerous than one would suppose—who remain convinced that the United Kingdom has a duty and an opportunity to contract out of the cold war and establish itself as an international peacemaker and "honest broker" between those dangerous moonstruck sleep-walkers, the Russians and the Americans.

Some of these arguments are clearly irrational or even dishonest. There is nothing in the Treaty of Rome to bar the adoption of a planned economy or the extension of public control over industry. The French have a Planning Commission (whose success in rebuilding France's economy and insuring a rate of growth double that of Britain is now reluctantly admitted by Conservatives), and the Scandinavian countries have Socialist governments which are not afraid of European economic integration: if Sweden stays out it will be for political reasons. The fear that England may be swamped by masses of Italian immigrants is ludicrous: the Treaty expressly provides for administrative checks to free movements of population. The notion that going in means renouncing the role of international peacemaker seems hardly worth debating in the light of present world realities (unless it is put forward as an indirect way of advocating departure from NATO).

Some of the traditionalist qualms are no more firmly based. In the debate following Macmillan's announcement it was solemnly argued by a Conservative ex-Minister that "joining Europe" meant sacrificing the Common Law tradition and putting England under Roman Law (which Scotland has always had). This is on a par with the argument that the Monarchy could not stand the strain, or that the House of Lords would look even more like an antiquated joke. Holland, which admittedly has Roman Law and even the Code Napoléon, also has a monarchy and a second chamber (though its composition is less irrational than Britain's), and the Dutch do not seem to have sacrificed any of their cherished traditions. The argument that the Parliament at Westminster would lose much of its power to a European assembly is more serious. It has been put forward both by socialist planners fearful of possible interference by a conservative European governing body, and by patriots alarmed at the thought that Westminster may become a parish assembly compared with the future parliament of Europe. Some people might think this not wholly a misfortune. But in any case it is a rather distant threat to be guarding against at this stage.

The truth is that opposition to joining—leaving aside the pressure groups who are willing to be bought off—arises from a complex of motives which are really insular, although often expressed in arguments of the "we can't let the Commonwealth down" variety. The Commonwealth—or rather the Empire—used to come first with the Tories, and still does, in the sense that, in the last extremity, they would opt for it rather than for Europe. This point was made forcibly

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during the debate by Churchill's son-in-law, Duncan Sandys, one of the three Cabinet Ministers whom Macmillan sent out from the Ark last July to see what the waters overseas were like. He would not, he said, agree to cutting the Commonwealth link, but then he did not think it was necessary: Britain could continue to play her traditional role while also becoming a member of a European association. It is doubtful whether this is really practicable, but the belief that it can be done is an important element in the Conservatives' reluctant readiness to take the plunge into Europe.

There are, however, a number of Tories who do not share this belief. They suspect—and some of them have said it openly—that the government, under American pressure, is edging into a political confederation while pretending all the time that it is only a matter of tariffs. There are even some right-wing Tories who on this issue are willing to make common cause with left-wing Socialists. One of them, the eccentric Lord Hinchingbrooke, was cheered by some Labor members during the debate when he accused the government of selling out the country's independence, and referred darkly to "members on this side who would rather see this country ruled by European bureaucracy than by British socialism. The fear of nationalization, of loss of business enterprise and of over-taxation, is such in the minds of many of my hon. friends that they think there is a nice easy escape route out of it into Europe." (Opposition cheers.) Lord Hinchingbrooke also thought there was "a sort of shotgun marriage going on with Europe—ordered by President Kennedy and carried out by the Prime Minister." Mr. R. H. S. Crossman, writing in the *New Statesman,* thought so too.

A lot of this is the ordinary froth of politics. There is no chance of Tory right-wingers and Socialist left-wingers getting together on a common platform, and not even much of a chance that Labor as a whole will come out against joining the Common Market: Gaitskell and Harold Wilson were careful to qualify their criticism of the government's decision to open negotiations, and even so they were abandoned by the *Daily Herald,* which has become an enthusiastic advocate of Europeanism, as have most of the other papers. It is not going to be easy to stand out against this flood of publicity, unless the argument that joining Europe means abandoning the Commonwealth can really be pressed home. But for this to be done, the Opposition would first of all have to make up its own mind on the subject, and that mind seems remarkably split. In all probability Labor could win the next election on a nationalist platform, for a party which wraps itself in the flag can hardly lose, especially in a country as traditionally insular and xenophobic as England. But Gaitskell is not the man for this kind of demagogy, and Messrs. Wilson and Crossman don't appear to be wresting the leadership from him. Fundamentally, however, the objection to this strategy is that if Labor won it would then find itself stuck with the problem of persuading the country that belts must be tightened all round.

FOR THE NOTION that Britain can get out of its current economic predicament by leaning on the Commonwealth is nonsense. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand—not to mention India—have never been interested in schemes for a joint customs union, and are now busy raising tariffs against British manufactures. The system of preferences has been steadily eroded for years, and inter-Commonwealth trade has been expanding much more slowly than trade between the UK and other industrial countries. The argument that Britain under a socialist government could raise the necessary capital for investment in Asia and Africa, and so bring about a great expansion of Commonwealth trade, forgets that these investments must ultimately come out of the hide of the British consumer. Ten years of Conservative rule have accustomed this consumer (who is also a voter) to the idea that he is entitled to a steady rise in living standards, for contrary to some familiar notions, the Conservative party is no longer identified with hard times: it has sold itself to the voters as the party of full employment and prosperity all around. It has even gone dangerously far in sacrificing economic rationality to political considerations. Thus in 1960, personal incomes (mostly wages and salaries) rose by some £1,500 million, while domestic production climbed by barely £650 million: an amount no greater than the extra consumer spending. The result, not sur-

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prisingly, was another balance-of-payments crisis, and heavy drawings upon European and international reserve funds. It is easy to say that a Socialist government might have done better, but it is not so easy to see where the Labor party is going to find the courage—and the public support—to introduce planned austerity in a country which has come to take a constant rise in incomes for granted. Socialism is a virtuous doctrine, but also an uncomfortable one. The average voter, once bitten under the postwar austerity regime of Attlee and Cripps, is not anxious for more of the same. When told by left-wingers that "socialism has now become the precondition of national independence," he is likely to translate this into meaning that if Labor gets in there will be less to buy in the shops. It would be different if the Opposition were able to promise a drastic cut in the defense budget, but with the exception of a few pacifists no one believes this is feasible.

The probability then is that Britain will join the Common Market, and that by 1970 or thereabouts the United Kingdom will have settled down to membership in a European confederation. How is this going to affect the public life of a country which until now has always regarded itself as a world apart from the Continent of Europe? Is it conceivable that the British, who in their hearts still consider themselves a cut above other Europeans, will seriously make the transition and work for the common good alongside the French, the Germans, the Italians, and the lesser nations of the Continent? Or will they become sour and disgruntled, worshipers of a glorious past, and at best resentful passengers of the European ship? Is the Venetian shadow going to darken? There are pointers in both directions. The most one can say is that the choice still seems to be open.

IV

WHETHER THEY GO IN or stay out, the British must re-assess their position in today's world. It is a truism that the United Kingdom is no longer a great power. Now comes the more surprising discovery that in many respects it has fallen behind economically and socially. Labor party supporters still console themselves with the thought that at any rate the Britain they governed from 1945 to 1951 pioneered in economic planning, practical socialism, and the welfare state. They are surprised and incredulous when told that France has a larger (and more efficient) public sector, or that German pension schemes and French family allowances are ahead of the corresponding arrangements in this country. Businessmen are shocked to discover that the country has been falling steadily behind for a decade compared with its West European rivals. The statistics are remorseless: not only West Germany, but France, Italy, and Holland too have been advancing more rapidly. In exports the situation is positively grotesque: up by 14 per cent for Britain (since 1951), against a 200 per cent increase achieved by the Germans. In 1950 Britain's share of world exports in manufactures stood at 25 per cent of the total; by last year it had fallen to 15 per cent, and the rate of fall is accelerating. In 1960 the country was saved from a gold-reserve crisis only by a massive short-term influx of "hot money" whose panic flight last March brought on the humiliation of having to ask the European central banks for emergency aid to the tune of £5–600 million (the figure has not been disclosed). Since then the Treasury has been bailed out by the International Monetary Fund to the extent of $2 billion, after the government had promised to put the economy through the wringer to prevent a repetition of payments crises. It is probable that by the time these various forms of aid had arrived, *half* the total gold and dollar reserve had evaporated. The *Economist* (August 12) described this disclosure as "shattering." It is certainly not a healthy foundation on which to conduct delicate and difficult negotiations with one's future partners.

Behind the financial ups-and-downs described above there are long-term structural weaknesses which every inhabitant of the British Isles is aware of, though they are not often discussed in print. Some have to do with the country's archaic educational system, which turns out fewer scientists and technologists per million of population than Yugoslavia, and about one-seventh the American rate; others are plainly due to the ingrained conservatism of the trade unions, now often regarded even by Socialists as the biggest block to economic prog-

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ress; still others relate to the national cult of amateurishness, which makes life in England very agreeable, but does not promote efficiency.

How far this latter trait is responsible for the obstinate resistance of the official world to the introduction of more economic planning—or even of simple things like statistics and sociological research—is debatable. The upper ranks of the civil service are peopled by men and women of the highest integrity and outstanding intellectual ability, but lower down, the national preference for amateurs (with or without a classical education) probably has a hampering effect on the operation of the economy, public and private. Boards of directors are heavily weighted with "passengers" of good social standing, but are notably short on scientists and economists. Exporters tend to be monolingual, and helpless when faced with the need to communicate with foreigners in their language. Transport facilities are out of date, and unofficial strikes at docks and airports frequent. There is a pathetic belief that goods can be sold on the strength of the "British" label.

And there is the national dislike of perfectionism. A correspondent in the neo-conservative *Crossbow* magazine, which champions the Common Market along with efficiency in general, recently sounded the alarm after a brief stay on the Continent: "When I was in Strasbourg it seemed to me that the Community is a very much more efficient affair than people over here realize. They have a staff whose professionalism is in almost brilliant contrast with the amateurish old-boyism and 'Dear Charles' type of correspondence which our own civil servants too often equate with work. Finally they are aided by a corps of specialist economic journalists writing serious articles, in journals which do not have either a Woman's page or a Sports page. Imagine that!"

POSSIBLY ONE EXAGGERATES the importance of these things, but it does seem remarkable that sports should be treated with such deadly solemnity on the main BBC news bulletin (which, however, does not mean that much is done to promote them: in fact the country has ten times fewer athletic tracks than Sweden). It also seems odd that, next to sports, the chief staples of conversation should still be furnished by purely national, and in some cases grotesquely insular, topics, such as the question whether or not a hereditary peer should be allowed to relinquish his title and sit in the House of Commons. The fact that this particular matter was not only lengthily debated for a whole year, but actually produced something in the nature of a minor political crisis, tells one a great deal about the temper of England in 1961. It is true that this insularity has its agreeably utopian side: in what other country would the legislature have dropped all its other business to take up the complaint of a Scottish member (a Conservative, incidentally), that one of his constituents—a working-class boy of sixteen—had been cuffed on the ear by a police constable? Where else would members have found time to protest to the Home Secretary about such unheard-of behavior? (The constable was reprimanded; his excuse was that the boy had used unprintable language when held on a drink charge.)

This is a very civilized country, though it still has the death penalty (another topic of endless, boring controversy). Its intellectuals are firmly persuaded that it is the most civilized country in the world, and that its eventual decision to enter a European confederation will confer a priceless boon on the lesser breeds across the Channel. Perhaps it will. The French and Italian police, with their habit of beating up prisoners as a matter of routine, could certainly benefit from being exposed to British standards. And not only they. It is a fact that there is less brutality or dishonesty in England than in most places one has heard of, that aristocratic codes of behavior have somehow become generally accepted, and that public life is remarkably pure. All the same, national self-congratulation can be overdone. Of late, the tendency to lecture the Germans on their past, and the French on their present (rather minor) sins, has produced an atmosphere which is not conducive to realism. It has also borne fruit in a rather absurd tone of condescension—for which the BBC must assume part of the guilt—whenever the Continent is discussed: as though Britain were not in fact part of Europe, and as though the British differed more from their next-door neighbors than, say, from Indians and Africans. To hear left-wing

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literati discourse on the topic of going into a socialist-neutralist alliance with Nehru, and letting "reactionary" Europe go hang, is to realize that the depths of intellectual folly are not easily plumbed.

THERE IS IN FACT not much of a choice, though some eminent members of the Labor party—including such Atlantic World stalwarts as Denis Healey—seem to think otherwise. Britain's road to the Atlantic Union of the future (which these serious and responsible critics of Europeanism would like to promote) lies through membership in a European Confederation. It is arguable—it has in fact been very persuasively argued by Healey—that for Britain this is a bad choice. That may be, but ten years of Conservative rule (and six years of Labor rule before it, if the truth be told) have blocked the alternative. That at any rate is the conclusion of most dispassionate observers. It will be surprising if they are all proved wrong. Socialism may yet, in Mr. Crossman's words, turn out to be the salvation of Britain's independence, but this writer for one proposes to treat such statements with a skepticism bred from the experience of having watched the Socialists in office.

If there is one thing on which right-wing traditionalists and left-wing nationalists are agreed, it is resentment when faced with the suggestion that going into Europe offers the only hope of tackling those long-term structural problems which can no longer be ignored. Left-wing Socialists now talk of "collapsing into Europe," and there are not a few Empire-minded Tories who have written Macmillan off as a fraud. What such critics seem to overlook is that the two great parties have conspired since 1945 in creating an atmosphere in which few of the basic weaknesses could be cured because the party game put a premium on immobility and featherbedding. Both have likewise done their best to turn the country into a museum of antiquities: not forgetting such intellectual antiquities as neo-conservatism and the philosophy of drift, as expounded to the future elite of society by fashionable sages in the universities and the highbrow journals. Add to this the extraordinary milksoppiness of the public, the dislike of anything involving a conscious departure from tradition, the growth of pacifism and little-Englandism, and the tendency to turn in upon one's past and linger over its achievements—and it is not easy to see how the energies required to break with this state of mind can be generated unless there is some outside pressure.

That this pressure is going to take institutional form as soon as Britain becomes a member of some European organization, is a danger much feared and resented—and not only in Conservative quarters. What one would like to ask the opponents of Europeanism is how they envisage an alternative way of bringing the country out of its comfortable, but ultimately suicidal, complacency and self-satisfaction. Belt-tightening is not popular and can never be made acceptable to a democratic electorate; nor can genuine, drastic modernization—of the educational system, or lack of system, above all—be introduced into a profoundly conservative society as a matter of free choice.

There simply is no getting round the fact that these changes will have to come, if at all, under the impact of having to compete in an environment no longer artificially sheltered by the protective walls of national sovereignty. "We shall have to become efficient, and that is going to be painful," as some prominent supporters of the Common Market put it in a letter to the *Times*. They were thinking primarily of economics, but indirectly what is involved is a whole way of life, and an outlook upon the rest of the world which no longer corresponds to realities. It is regrettable that the decision to take the plunge should have had to be made under pressure of circumstances, and doubly regrettable that the now inevitable choice is deeply resented even by people whose outlook and training fits them for the task of interpreting the new Europe to their countrymen. But that is the price to be paid for the somnolent 50's—those years that the locust hath eaten, as Churchill once observed of another period of sloth and complacency. Even the most insular and privileged of nations cannot in the end escape the logic imposed upon all Europeans in an age which leaves no middle ground between the super-power and the confederation of free peoples.

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GERDA LUFT

THE KIBBUTZ IN CRISIS

DESPITE THE FACT that the Israeli kibbutz is in some ways an ideal place to live and work—that it offers absolute social security and even in many cases a relatively high standard of physical comfort—the collective settlements have for some years now been suffering from a shortage of manpower. This shortage is what lies behind the crisis that the kibbutzim are undergoing today—the famous crisis that has stirred up so much heat in the settlements themselves as well as in all branches of the Israeli press. An effort has been made to offset the manpower shortage by an increase in machinery, but it has met with only partial success; the most modern combine cannot make up for the waning enthusiasm for kibbutz life among the young people of Israel. Today even the high-school-educated sabras, brought up in the youth movements that helped found some of the kibbutzim, often leave their settlements after only a few years.

So far, no one has come up with a convincing explanation as to who or what is to blame for the decline of the kibbutz. The old settlers point to a lack of a pioneering spirit. They recall their own early days in the land when they learned to withstand a severe climate while suffering from hunger and malaria. The new generation, sabra and immigrant alike, yearns for American washing machines and cars, dreams of soft jobs and nice apartments—is composed of careerists, in short, in a country that still needs dedicated pioneers. So runs the bitter accusation of the old-timers.

A more specific explanation seeks to relate the kibbutz crisis to the decline in profits currently being suffered by the farming community. During periods of mass immigration (the early 50's mainly), Israeli agriculture profited from two almost simultaneous economic developments: an inflation which lightened the burden of the farmers' debts, and an expanded market of new settlers. The farming community was able to get high prices for fresh vegetables, eggs, fowl—for everything, in short, which could not be imported. Those farmers who had obtained loans in sterling under the British were able to repay them in depreciated Israeli pounds.

This situation came to an end when prices were stabilized through various governmental deflationary policies, and also through the glut created by the increased agricultural production. But the kibbutzim, which had profited along with all the other farmers, refused to slow down in their plans for expansion and mechanization. Failing to get sufficient credit at regular rates of interest from official sources, they contracted loans at prohibitive rates and so accumulated debts which in them-

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selves were enough to create severe financial difficulties. At the same time, getting less for their products, the kibbutzim were forced to pay more for fuel and fertilizer, for services and manufactured goods, because of generally rising production costs. Yet the kibbutzim had experienced a number of times before economic problems of equal gravity, over which they were able to triumph. No one had thought of calling it a "crisis." Now, there seems to be something considerably more serious at work than mere financial troubles.

On the other hand, the several political parties that rely to a great extent on the kibbutzim for support argue that the Israeli government has failed to give enough aid to the collective settlements. They prove, by complicated statistics, that the *moshavim*—the cooperative settlements where the land is individually held—receive more from the Ministry of Agriculture than the kibbutzim, and that therefore the latter are disadvantaged by having to carry a disproportionately heavy economic burden.*

These same political parties point to another factor: the present ban in the elementary schools against the political youth groups through which the various kibbutz movements were once so well able to propagate their ideas. Formerly, the students were in the habit of passing two to three evenings a week in the clubs controlled by these movements. They listened to propaganda lectures, worked on a kibbutz during their summer vacations, and often, right after completing high school, joined the kibbutz of their choice. But when the kibbutzim became consolidated into three separate organizations, each connected with one of the three Israeli labor parties, political squabbling broke out frequently right inside the elementary school classrooms. The authorities finally banned the opposing youth groups from the schools. (The only club allowed to remain was the non-political Boy Scouts.)

The two left-wing parties, Mapam and Ahduth Avodah (and some elements of the governing Mapai also), insist that the only way to lure people into the collective settlements is to "catch them young": once men and women have tasted the life of the towns, they cannot be educated for pioneering. It should, however, be pointed out that this argument ignores the recent developments which reveal that many people who *were* educated in the youth movements also tend to leave the kibbutzim after a few years. Nor does the argument about catching them young consider why it is that among the army recruits who avail themselves of the chance the government offers them to spend some part of their training on the settlements, the number who return to the kibbutz after completing their tour of duty is conspicuously dwindling.

IF WE LOOK back to the beginnings of the kibbutz movement, we see that national and social motivations both provided its original impetus. The young Russian immigrants who came to Palestine before World War I wanted to work the land, but they found themselves unable to compete with the Arab workers already inured to the climate, to manual labor, and to a lower standard of living. These Jews banded together, pooled their earnings, and, finding it cheaper and easier to cook meals for a group and live together in one room, managed to survive. "Collective consumption"—to use the term favored by sociologists of the kibbutz movement—preceded "collective production."

But these struggling young pioneers understood that the entire Zionist colonization effort might collapse if its only form was to be a small group of estate owners employing a large number of Arabs. Jews had to be capable of doing every kind of

* At the end of 1958 there were 846 agricultural settlements in Israel (not including the Arab villages), which together contained a population of 480,000. Among them were 335 individual cooperative settlements (*moshavim*) supporting 124,000 people, and 228 kibbutzim with 80,000 members.

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work if a National Home was to develop. Out of this realization came Degania, the first collective Jewish settlement in Palestine.

Degania was established without any well-formulated program; its main purpose was to secure for Jews steady work in agriculture. A group of friends came together, built a house, and began farming. But for these men and women, steeped in the socialist ideals of pre-Bolshevik revolutionary Russia, the development of the National Home meant the opportunity of building a new society, based on principles of social justice. They wished, for one thing, to dispense with the employer altogether. They pooled their earnings and shared the housework; there were no statutes and no rules. The cash-box—with or without cash—was left open for each member to take whatever he needed at any time. For a while, the group avoided making any decisions that might not be unanimous, and relied for its ongoing success on the friendship that bound its members.

The survival, despite all hardships, of these first communes—which were called *kvutzot*—provided an answer to the problems of Zionist colonization at a difficult juncture. Developing modern agricultural methods as a way of meeting Arab competition (and Arab attack), the settlements at the same time developed an ideology for collective living. It gradually became an accepted tenet of the Zionist labor movement, and of large segments of the general Zionist movement, that only Jewish labor could build the National Home.

After the First World War, when the way from Europe to Palestine was again open, the settlements began to propagate the ideas of collective living among the Jewish youth in Europe. People who wanted to go to Palestine trained themselves not only for agricultural work but for collective life as well. In the 20's, some of the newer immigrants, anticipating increased immigration, felt the entire framework of the settlements had to be enlarged, so as to take in more members, and also to create additional employment in workshops and factories. The "kibbutz" came into existence. The kibbutz was open to all comers, accepting immigrants without restriction; some kibbutzim grew with astonishing speed from a hundred to over a thousand members. Then, in the Arab disturbances of 1936–39, and in the far-reaching restrictions on land purchase imposed by the MacDonald White Paper of 1939, the kibbutzim and the entire Jewish community of Palestine—the Yishuv—faced one of their toughest challenges. The Jewish reply was not only to hold fast in every settlement already established—regardless of danger—but to increase the number of settlements as quickly as possible in the outlying districts. The kibbutzim came through these trials in triumph, and considerably strengthened.

When the State of Israel was founded, in 1948, the kibbutz movement was expected to expand at an even more accelerated pace. The flight of the Arabs had left new land to be cultivated, and mass immigration promised manpower on a scale hitherto unknown. Yet it was during this very period that, against expectations, the kibbutzim gradually stopped growing. They had been in the forefront of the settlement movement up to then, but now they began to fall back before the individual farmers of the *moshavim*: the latter, established in the 20's, had never been a rival of much importance.

During the middle 50's, an internal dispute caused a grave setback. In the settlements organized in the "Kibbutz Meuhad," around Ein Harod, members of the rival political parties of Mapai (center) and Ahduth Avodah (left-wing) had lived side by side from the beginning. Gradually ideological differences around the question of the Soviet Union had begun to agitate people, and finally the argument developed to such a pitch that members of the opposing parties refused to eat together in the common dining hall. Some

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of the settlements literally split in two, one segment moving out to some other kibbutz until the rival camps could be physically —that is, geographically—separated. New kibbutzim had to be built in some instances. Eventually, the split was healed over. But the clash demonstrated that even where the kibbutzim—and this was true especially of the older ones—were economically strong, when the members no longer lived together on the intimate basis so characteristic of the early days, political friction could profoundly endanger the unity of the settlements.

SOON AFTER, the kibbutzim found themselves unable to attract new candidates. Manpower shortage, up to then seemingly a temporary condition, became a chronic disease that threatened to impede all development. Part of the explanation lies in the type of immigrant who came into Israel in the 1950's. Arriving from the Moslem countries, the new immigrants were totally lacking in the kind of ideological training which had been carried over to the European Zionists by the emissaries of the Palestinian labor parties. Nothing could have been more alien to these "Oriental" Jews than kibbutz life—where no wages were paid out and women did men's work and voted in the General Assembly. To proclaim the kibbutz open to every comer was one thing; it was quite another to take in large Yemenite or North African families unaccustomed to the ways of Western civilization.

On the other hand, the immigrants who had been coming in from East Europe since 1945, though they were aware of the social theories which underlay the kibbutz, had acquired an aversion to collective life. That the kibbutz was not a *kolkhoz,* but founded on voluntary cooperation; that nobody could be forced to stay; that no coercion of any sort was involved in kibbutz life—all this made little difference. These men and women had come out of a Sovietized East and Central Europe, and now looked forward to a life defined wholly by their individual desires. Some among them, and even some of the Oriental Jews, ventured to try life on a kibbutz, and even came to accept and appreciate it. But the largest proportion of these new immigrants had no taste for it.

At first, the kibbutzim tried to fight against the obvious remedy of hired labor. The social principle of the collective was equality, political and economic. To employ people from outside, paying them to do a job while they in no way shared in the collective life, meant endangering the communal character of the kibbutz.

The kibbutzim stepped up their propaganda to attract additional members, but with scanty results. Since the principle of hired labor seemed finally inescapable, the idea was worked out of forming a "Production and Development" company (*Yitzur V'Pituah*), to take over the cultivation of the land for which the kibbutzim did not have enough manpower. The necessary machinery and some experienced people to run the company came from the old settlements. Laborers were recruited from among the new immigrants. It was believed that the company would keep the settlements uncontaminated; at the same time the state would benefit from the training of new immigrants, and after a few years the company land could be divided among the employees and new settlements formed.

The plan had a certain success, yet the individual kibbutzim were unable in the end to avoid resorting to the use of hired labor on their own grounds. By now, hired labor has become a permanent feature of the industrial enterprises of the kibbutzim and has invaded many of the farms as well. The only way to circumvent the steady increase in the numbers of the hired laborers appearing on the lands and in the factories of the kibbutzim would seem to be by a comprehensive yearly planning of the total production in every settlement. To date, however, the problem

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of how to keep the kibbutz a pure collective communal enterprise remains unresolved, and forms only the most prominent aspect of the general crisis of the kibbutzim.

Just when other unfavorable changes were striking at kibbutz life, in the middle 50's, Israeli youth began to lose interest. It is no exaggeration to say that the flower of Israeli youth had served as the reservoir of manpower for the kibbutzim. Lawyers, doctors, government officials, well-to-do merchants and industrialists, the leaders of the labor movement, all took it for granted that their children would spend their evenings at the local youth clubs listening to lecturers from some outlying kibbutz who had come to town expressly to teach the young people about collective communal life. City people also took it for granted that their sons and daughters would spend school vacations on a kibbutz instead of doing the alternative tour of specialized army training. A year or two in a kibbutz—often near the dangerous border—usually sufficed to make people join it for good.

In several new kibbutzim, the entire membership was composed of sabras, Israeli-born adolescents, more often than not from middle-class families. To be sure, parents accepted with mixed feelings the choice of their children to spurn study at the university and move to the desert to develop the barren land. Yet if a family—especially one where the father was a lawyer or doctor—felt some legitimate regret that their gifted son had skipped the university to lead the life of a farmer, it was also proud that one of their own belonged to what was considered the elite of the nation. For a long time, the creation of a class of farmers had been held up as the main task of Zionist colonization. The settlement authorities concentrated on the establishing of agricultural units, and the most enterprising and hardy immigrants turned to agriculture, largely in the kibbutzim.

Just before the establishment of the state, this glamorous view of the pioneer settlers began to shift its focus somewhat in the direction of the command and training staffs of the Haganah, which were then being developed. True, insofar as the settlements were important recruiting fields for the Haganah ranks (the kibbutzim furnished many of Haganah's leaders), the glamor of the military in a way enhanced the prestige of the settlements.

But with the outbreak of the Jewish-Arab war and the establishment of the state, a vast new complex of problems suddenly faced the country. A government administration had to be formed, an army created, mass immigration dealt with. Economic development was speeded up, and official interest no longer centered mainly on agriculture. Settlements were now being founded at a quicker pace than ever before, but at the same time the towns were expanding rapidly. The urban development meant an upsurge in industrialization and in all of the service occupations—today, in fact, industry is on the point of ousting agriculture from the center of the stage.

All these new developments put a premium on people who were skilled in business and had a flair for organizational life. The army needed men who were ready to tackle problems of organization and instruction and to master new scientific methods, while the industries needed technicians, business administrators, market researchers, engineers, efficiency experts. The kibbutzim were the first to supply several outstanding men—Levi Eshkol, for example, one of the leaders of Degania, became the Minister of Finance. Other kibbutz settlers entered the Knesset, or took high posts in the army and the civil administration; some went into the diplomatic service. All this had a twofold effect: while it added to the glory of the kibbutz movement, it also took away from the settlements some of their most talented people. Building the

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collectives, clearly, was no longer Israel's most important task. And the youth had come to see this.

The immigrants flooding Israel at this time came from countries where few of the professions now so badly needed were known; the government had to import experts and train new ones. Israeli youth responded to this situation by crowding the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the Technion in Haifa.

Other young people went abroad to study, and returned with new ideas, not only about performing their jobs, but about living their lives. They moved into the modern houses that were being put up, filled with modern furniture and the latest gadgets. These young people now look to the "developed" countries—and especially to the United States—for models of dress and manners and, just as often, for a philosophy of life. They dislike speeches and declare flatly that they are allergic to "Zionism," by which they mean anything that seems to have something to do with propaganda and ideological preaching. Ben Gurion's famous attempt to set an example for Israeli youth by settling in Sdeh Boker in 1954, to breed sheep, was no more successful than other attempts to interest the youth of the 50's in ideas and ideals evolved twenty or thirty years before.

It is this total complex that the older generation labels "careerism." Moreover, they see the loss of the country's pioneering spirit as both a moral and a practical loss. The development of the Negev, for example, remains one of Israel's principal tasks, requiring the type of pioneer who built up the Galilee. But the charge of careerism must always be examined against the given background: today the fact is that people are turning from the kibbutzim to challenges they consider more vital. And it should also be realized that the best of Israel's young people dream of much more than cheap city amusements. They believe that the new challenges which have arisen can only be met with the help of technical training and arduous study. It is this belief which, capping all the other problems, has caused the crisis in the kibbutz.

DESPITE ALL SETBACKS, the kibbutzim are themselves continuing to undergo changes whose import is difficult to assess. At the very time when the country rings with cries about the kibbutz crisis, life in the collectives not only becomes more comfortable but offers more possibilities for gifted people than ever before. In the old "heroic" days, for example, everybody would try his hand at everything; jobs that were unpopular because they were "unproductive"—work in the kitchen, for example—would be done in turns. But today skill is much too valuable to be wasted and a good vegetable grower will be left in the vegetable plot where he adds to his experience year after year. The costly tractors and combines are in the hands of trained people. Even in the "unproductive" services—kitchen, laundry, storeroom—the work is carefully planned, by trained people, and done with the help of machinery. A woman who shows an aptitude for cooking will be sent to study nutrition; others may be sent to a teachers' seminary, some even to the university.

Also, industrialization is expanding. In the early stages, during the 20's, when the idea of combining agriculture with industry was first conceived, ambition mainly ran to small workshops which were designed to provide only for the settlements' needs. Later, factories producing for the market were set up, and occasionally some settlements banded together to establish an enterprise beyond the capacity of any one of them. (An example is the modern Sefen plywood factory in the Jordan valley, now producing for export.)

Because the expansion of agricultural settlements has come to a standstill (for the moment at least), the kibbutzim pay increased attention to their industry. Often, a number of kibbutzim combine to build a factory on a regional basis. Even

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bakeries and laundries are accommodated to service more than one kibbutz; a new laundry might serve a whole district. This sort of change means that the people who run such enterprises will no longer spend their workdays inside their own kibbutz. Eventually, for a certain number of members, the kibbutz wil become only a place to live in. There have been such cases before: the bus driver sent from his own settlement to his job on the bus cooperative; the Knesset member, living in Jerusalem during the week but spending his weekend at home on the kibbutz, to which he also transfers his salary. Until now these instances were the exception. Once they become the rule, the organization of kibbutz life will surely undergo a radical change.

A very important consideration in the general picture of the kibbutz is the assessment of its unique role in the total Israeli economy. Except for orange-growing (where private enterprise is still in the lead), the kibbutz fulfills the tasks performed in other countries by the big estates. Like these estates, the kibbutzim have the money and credit, the initiative, knowledge, and foresight to introduce the latest machines and equipment. If today the tractor and the combine, the milking machine and the mechanical cotton-picker, can be found almost everywhere in Israel, that progress can be credited to the energy and drive of the kibbutz leadership—itself compelled forward by the vastness of the areas to be cultivated and the limited manpower to do the cultivating. It is a factor not lightly to be passed over, that if the kibbutzim lose their initial attraction (as have collective farms in other countries), their deterioration, aside from all other consequences, might prove to be a severe blow to the total economic development of the country.

The English sociologist, W. Arthur Lewis, has written:

> Most observers seem to agree that the success of these collectives has depended so far upon the special emotions associated with immigrant Jewish agriculture in Israel, and upon the part played by collective organization in the military defense of isolated settlements. Sooner or later the special strains and emotions involved in the creation of a Jewish National Home will wear off, and if the collectives then retain their primitive communism and succeed economically, they will be doing so contrary to all previous human experience.

If this is so, what other groups could perform the economic role developed by the kibbutzim? On the one hand there exists at present no class of private farmers ready to take over the collective settlements; on the other hand, the kibbutzim constitute a pool of knowledge, skill, and experience which the country cannot afford to waste.

The kibbutz may, nevertheless, continue to decline, suffering from the loss of moral prestige it once commanded, weakened more and more by the chronic shortage of manpower already so visible. New settlements formed by sabras have tried to stem the tide by going back to what they consider fundamentals, enforcing a strict formal equality. Some among the older kibbutzim have made an effort to pay more attention to individual wishes, or to the desire for greater privacy. Perhaps there has been some success in slowing down the pace of deterioration—but deterioration goes on.

The fate of the kibbutzim finally will be determined, as will many other aspects of life in Israel, by the attitude of the second generation. In some of the old settlements, sons take over from their fathers with the greatest ease. In others, they become restless and leave. The number and quality of those who stay will condition the character and fate of the older kibbutzim.

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Jewish Identity

To the Editor of Commentary:

Nothing I have read on the vexed problem of Jewish identity since Sartre's famous essay seems to me as honest and intelligent as Daniel Bell's article in your June issue ["Reflections on Jewish Identity"].

Perhaps I can add a footnote.

Bell analyzes the problem of ambivalent or diminishing identity from the point of view of the Jew in America and in American society. The American Jew who came from Europe during the Nazi period—in the late 1930's and any time during the 1940's—seems to me to offer a special and illuminating case. He knows that his survival is a miracle, an eccentricity of circumstance, a kind of minute error of statistics. His name and number were destined to figure on the rolls of extermination. He will always carry with him the taste of near catastrophe and, in my case at least, a certain touch of bad conscience. No one who has seen his own community or intellectual world wiped out in the gas ovens can think back on the event without feeling that his own survival is, in some manner, cheating. One should have been there or gone back for the roll call. The fact that one got away is a marvel of good fortune; but it carries with it a badge of evasion. How would one have behaved at Buchenwald? As well as some of one's friends and relatives, or as badly? Not to know the answer is both a blessing and a torment.

Thus the American Jew of recent European background brings to the problem of identity and assimilation a particular awareness, a kind of bone-deep intimation of constant danger which the native Jew will often find hard to understand. . . . [Yet] such fantastic decimation should create in all of us a certain lesion or sense of mutilation. Nerves continue to ache long after a limb has been severed. I feel deeply that this is a crucial part of the problem of identity, yet it has received little attention. When I mentioned it as a possible theme to as acute a writer as Philip Roth, he said that it had little realness for anyone born and brought up in a genuine American context.

I can understand the psychological reasons for this, but I wonder whether they do not involve a measure of blindness. American Jewish life seems to me to display numerous symptoms of the tensions, of the spurious adjustments, of the cowardice, which so ghastly a mutilation is bound to provoke even among those who have not been directly menaced. Let me cite a few characteristic examples drawn from very different spheres of action.

In the queer, pseudo-scientific world of "strategic studies" and para-military research, a number of Jews are playing a leading part (this is in itself a curious fact in view of the traditional Jewish distaste for the military establishment). Some of them have put forward much publicized "models" of warfare involving the calculated risks of thirty to sixty million casualties. They juggle such figures with an air of rational mathematical sobriety. Surely there is a complex but real connection between such models of argument and the nearly inconceivable fact that six million Jews were themselves reduced to figures in the columns of German ledgers. Or consider the recent case of a large gang of thieves made up of young middle-class Jewish boys who felt that they "needed a wall to knock their heads against." Just the week before, captured Nazi films were being shown on television including a sequence in which Jewish children were being thrashed for having tried to steal some rotten potatoes near the entrance of the Warsaw Ghetto. Is there no inward relation between the two events?

A final example: the New York *Times* is a paper in whose production Jews play a senior and prominent role. Yet nowhere in its front-page obituary of Jung was there any reference to Jung's notorious flirtations with the Nazis and to his treatment of German Jewish psychologists. Indeed, the piece would have led one to believe that in the break between Freud and Jung, the fault lay somehow with Freud's "harshness" or narrow orthodoxy. What is at work here is a kind of neurosis of "impartiality," an attempt by solidly established American Jews to "lean over backward" in their presentation of events.

These are petty examples, but they have a larger relevance. A community that does

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not use its special gifts and economic position to defend and articulate its values and heritage is always in danger. This danger is increased when the immediate past of that community is so terrible that most people can hardly bear to think about it. Tell an American Jew who is thinking of changing his name or who dreams of the Unitarian church around the corner that the Nazis sought out even those who had been baptized thirty years, and he will look at you as if you were speaking of another planet.

Perhaps it was. But there are strong anti-Semitic forces in every complex society and anti-Semites now know that a "final solution" of the Jewish problem is *possible*. Millions anywhere *can* be rounded up and gassed like lice. That knowledge and its implications shadow the life of every Jew wherever he may be. It shadows the very existence of every Jew wherever he may be. It shadows the very existence of his children. This, I submit, is the tragic core of our identity. It unites in a common bond of danger the Orthodox Jew and the agnostic, the traditionalist and the assimilationist. It is our universal passport.

GEORGE STEINER

Princeton, N. J.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Let me register a sharp dissent from some of the more general assumptions in Daniel Bell's nostalgic and brilliant article.

Mr. Bell suggests first that sensibility and experience are new resources in the formation of spiritual values, somehow distinctively modern and far removed from the criteria of value recognized by Hellenistic Jews and other Jews of the past. In my judgment, on the contrary, Hillel and Koheleth and Jeremiah were all men who relied very heavily upon sensibility and experience in developing their values and their views of the human world. They too inherited a fragmented tradition and a break with the immediate past. I feel, therefore, that Mr. Bell's projection against the whole Jewish past of his alienation from traditions of "faith" and "reason" sets up one more blockage against the kind of awareness which may enable us to find a confirmation in the past while avoiding the repetition of historic mistakes.

Mr. Bell speaks also of the individual's responsibility for moral evaluations, as though this requirement had not been recognized in other generations and as though moral crisis were a special burden of moderns who have broken with Orthodoxy. But this awareness of individual spiritual responsibility is precisely what members of our generation are most likely to have in common with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. . . .

Finally, let me voice my dissent from Mr. Bell's overly neat categorization of the American Jewish generations. In this and in his final statement about the ambiguous relationship between the American and Jewish aspects of his own identity, I feel that he squeezes his Jewish affiliation into a parochial corner of his urbane life of experience, sensibility, and responsibility.

ADAM FRANK

Washington, D. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Allow me to comment on Mr. Daniel Bell's interesting article from the point of view of one who is both an Israeli and a Zionist in the original, genuine, "Ben-Gurionic" sense of the term. Discussing the dangers of Jewish identity in the American Diaspora, Mr. Bell mentions Israel only once, in passing. He says: "The problem is spiritual, not territorial. Israel is no answer." With this brief remark, he seems to dispense with a whole tradition of thought which maintains that precisely by returning to their historical homeland will the Diaspora Jews also regain their disintegrating spiritual identity. . . . An Israeli Jew—or, for that matter, any Jew who would settle in Israel—has no more "identity problems" than an Italian in Italy or a Greek in Greece. Mr. Bell's omission of this most important historical solution to the problem of identity of Diaspora Jews—especially the non-Orthodox ones—is a limitation of his otherwise perceptive analysis.

MOSHE SARELL

Baltimore, Md.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Daniel Bell's representation of Orthodox Judaism is a complete distortion. . . .

Bell invokes Maimonides as the authority for his statement that according to Orthodoxy, "one does not have to believe in God to be a good Jew, one merely has to follow Halakhah." Yet in his codification of the Halakhah, *Mishneh Torah,* Maimonides states that the Halakhah requires us to believe in God; and in his *Sepher Ha-Mitzvot,* Maimonides reckons belief in God as the first of the positive Commandments (the first of the famous Ten Commandments, in fact).

Bell quotes the *Guide to the Perplexed* that man should not "fall into the error of believing that the universe exists only be-

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cause of him," and counters: "A modern man wants to believe that some portion of the universe does exist for him, in the here and now. The Orthodox view of Judaism is too constricted for such a man to feel at home in." It is a far cry from wanting "some portion" to "believing that the universe exists only because of him."

Like so many others, Bell is disturbed by the passivity of the Nazis' victims in the concentration camps, and is only too ready to point to Orthodoxy as the source of quietism and fatalism. But not all of Hitler's victims were Orthodox—or even Jewish, for that matter. Besides the thousands of non-Jews from occupied countries, the camps contained thousands of Reform, and agnostic, and atheistic, and even converted Jews, who were impartially rounded up for extermination. Where was *their* fighting spirit? And how did religious, Orthodox Jews in Israel find it in themselves to join in the fight against the Arabs? . . .

(Rabbi) Jacob Bassan
Director

B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation
Kingston, Ontario, Canada

To the Editor of Commentary:

Daniel Bell states that Orthodoxy advocates the belief in fatalism. Though there may exist Orthodox persons who believe that everything is determined, I would like to suggest that this is not the teaching of the Jewish religion. Free will is a cardinal principle of Judaism.

In discussing the five theories of providence in his *Guide to the Perplexed,* Maimonides writes: "The theory of man's perfectly free will is one of the fundamental principles of the Law of our teacher Moses." He rejects the view that "each leaf falls according to the Divine decree."

David B. Morris

Rochester, New York

Mr. Bell *writes:*

(1) Mr. Frank's reading of the Prophets and the Fathers is through "modern" eyes, and blurs what is the essential distinction between them and "us": belief in Revelation. If Revelation is the source of truth, of God's word, then any test by experience becomes meaningless, if not sacrilegious. One aspect of the modern consciousness is the justification of truth through experience or sensibility—the fruits of pragmatism and existentialism. The pious Jew accepts the word of God, and performs the *mitzvot;* claims of faith take precedence over claims of doubt.

(2) Mr. Sarell may feel that the Israeli has no more problem of identity than an Italian in Italy or a Greek in Greece. Yet one hears voices, within Israel and without, that lament the "amnesia" among the young regarding the nineteen-hundred-year history of the Diaspora. Be that as it may; I have not been in Israel or studied its problems. My essay was a personal one, for any sense of identity is a tension of parochial experiences with both tradition and universal values. My experiences were in the cosmopolitan ghettos of New York, and it is with that past that I have to come to terms.

(3) Regarding the interpretations of Maimonides: I said that there was an *esoteric* tradition—and one that I had read during a year-long study of the *Mishneh Torah*—that the question whether or not a man really believes in God is less relevant than the necessity to fulfill all the ritual commandments, one of which is public avowal of God. The crucial problem for the Rambam was how to keep the Jewish community together in the midst of an alien environment, and for him—as for all Orthodox rabbis—the binding power of law and ritual was the means. Private belief, or disbelief, was irrelevant, so long as Halakhah was obeyed. (And, as I pointed out, there is even the further interpretation—of *sod?*—that Maimonides was motivated to stress this point in order to seduce the *apikorsim* to public avowals of belief.)

But ultimately (as expressed in the *Moreh Nebukhim*) the world is not created for man, and man cannot judge the world and its evils; only God can. And while man has a free will, regarding his *own* decisions to do good or evil, he does not know God's ways or God's will. (See the discussion of the freedom of will from the *Mishneh Torah* in the Jewish reader edited by Nahum Glatzer, *In Time and Eternity,* p. 68.) And this is the source of quietism. Rabbi Bassan does me a discourtesy in his stridency. I was not "too ready" to point to Orthodoxy alone as the source of passivity. I said that "we know about the ways in which hunger, fright, privation can depersonalize an individual." But Orthodoxy does accept the view that "suffering is the badge, [and] one accepts it as a mark of fate."

(4) I agree with much of what Mr. Steiner writes, though I doubt the justice of his remarks concerning (among others) Herman Kahn. (It may well be that the wartime death of six million Jews—and over thirty million Russians—has led some

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tough-minded individuals to seek the survival of *some* persons in the event that the madness of nuclear holocaust erupts.) For the modern Jew, self-emancipation—one facet of identity—is a "twice-born" process: once for "the race," once for himself. The crucial point is that for many young Jews, particularly the young Jewish intellectuals, the "idea" of "the race" becomes increasingly "unreal"— as the recent COMMENTARY symposium demonstrated. And some rude jolt may be in store for them. I believe, with Mr. Steiner, that the *daemon* of anti-Semitism lies thinly *sub specie aeternitatis;* more particularly, the conditions of American life in the next decade—the rebuffs abroad, the tensions of waiting (Americans prefer "action" to the sweating out of political disaster), and the cracks in the armor of American omnipotence—may bring it to the surface. But that is another, and sadder, essay.

Costs of American Scholarship

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Although I cannot claim to keep up with all the related material being published today, it seems to me that Leo Marx ["The American Scholar Today," July] has made a comprehensive appraisal of the intellectual problem of recent times. . . .

If Professor Marx is an indication of something stirring in American intellectual circles, then we can face the future with less timidity. . . . However, if Professor Marx is an isolated phenomenon and what he says falls on deaf ears, then I think the culture will die—as he suggested—by default, by self-induced blindness, by indifference. In a word, by *irresponsibility.*

HAROLD TOVISH

Brookline, Mass.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

We were all pleased to have our *Guide to the Study of the United States of America* noticed in Professor Leo Marx's very interesting article. However, I am sorry to note you have more than doubled the price of "this mammoth volume." Since our 1,193 pages, with the gold eagle thrown in, cost a mere $7.00 (and not $17.00, as the footnote on your page 48 says) and the Government Printing Office does not charge for postage, it is, we think, one of the best buys on the market today.

ROBERT H. LAND

Bibliography Division
Library of Congress

Warshow and Trilling

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

After reading Lionel Trilling's recent article ["The Mind of Robert Warshow," June] one feels that Trilling has revealed more of himself than of Warshow. . . . For example, in attempting to understand the latter's attitude toward Judaism, he discusses his own feeling of detachment from the Jewish community and then vaguely concludes that Warshow's feeling "was essentially not very different from my own." Trilling overemphasizes his role in the relationship with Warshow and sometimes brings himself into the picture in ways that cannot even begin to shed light on his subject. . . .

RICHARD M. SLOANE

Philadelphia, Pa.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his moving essay on Robert Warshow, Lionel Trilling gives an account of an altercation with me that squares little with what I myself remember of it.

The incident dates back to June 1945, which was many months before Robert Warshow came on the staff of COMMENTARY (of which I was an associate, never a managing, editor). I do not remember ever being shown a letter from Mr. Trilling in which he refused to "involve" himself with this magazine. The altercation that June night started over some remarks occasioned by an article of Edward N. Saveth's called "Henry Adams's Norman Ancestors" that had appeared in the June 1945 (and final) number of the *Contemporary Jewish Record* (of which I had been managing editor). I objected to what I thought was Mr. Trilling's assertion that Mr. Saveth was damning Henry Adams *in toto* for his anti-Semitism. A few sharp words were exchanged, but I do not at all remember accusing Mr. Trilling of "Jewish self-hatred." Least of all was there any suggestion of resorting to violence in order to settle the matter. What I do remember is that we ended up by glaring at each other amid a strained silence. . . .

CLEMENT GREENBERG

New York City

MR. TRILLING *writes:*

Clement Greenberg is quite right in his recollection of the particular subject that made the occasion of our dispute—it was, as he says, Edward Saveth's article on Henry Adams. I had entirely forgotten this until Mr. Greenberg's mention of it brought it

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at once and very clearly to mind. But I am as certain as anyone can be in a matter of memory that my letter to Elliot Cohen did have its part in our disagreement. My recollection is that I made the first reference to it and that Mr. Greenberg showed knowledge of it and commented on it adversely. And I am no less certain that—on the basis either of the letter or of my objections to the way in which Mr. Saveth had dealt with Henry Adams's anti-Semitism—Mr. Greenberg did accuse me of "Jewish self-hatred." The subject of our dispute being what it was, I cannot imagine what else Mr. Greenberg could have said that would have made me as angry as I was. On the question of whether or not we invited each other to step outside for purposes of violence, I must consider myself outvoted, for my wife's recollection agrees with Mr. Greenberg's and not with mine. Nevertheless I can say without any qualification of my certitude that the encounter was far more intense than Mr. Greenberg remembers it to have been; although we were both too sensible to allow the episode to make a permanent breach between us, at the time it took place it was charged with an extreme antagonism. . . .

Our National Purpose

To the Editor of Commentary:

Philip Green's "National Purpose and New Frontiers" [June] relies upon some interesting assumptions. First, he believes there are "real" social conflicts in America which are not adequately expressed by the present diffuse pattern of voluntary associations and interest groups. . . . Secondly, in contrast to his call for a realistic social politics, proposals for redistricting school systems (or similar partial reform measures) are too "mechanical" to create "adequate social incentives for the pursuit of excellence." Finally, he seems to believe that it is possible to enjoy a sense of real community in an extensive modern society and that it is only a series of willful materialistic choices which substitute the corporation for the community. . . .

I suspect these assumptions are incorrect. The burden of proof lies heavy on the social scientist who contends that real conflicts have, over a long period of time, been successfully suppressed. Voluntary associations and pressure groups, for better or for worse, express the conflicts in American society and in so doing, as de Tocqueville noted, contribute to the stability of the society. Secondly, minor institutional changes in the public schools, particularly those which open up new possibilities in curriculum and exposure to the intellectual and public life, may significantly alter the behavior of students —without initially being connected with a massive change in ideas or in the total structure of the institution. It is hard to estimate, for example, how much effect the introduction of college-level courses into the high schools—where so many want to go to college—may have on the values and work habits of students. . . .

Finally, I think Mr. Green tends to misread American history. The great achievements of the American system in the 19th century were, as he says, almost without exception "material" rather than "spiritual" and were achieved "through—*not* in spite of—the anti-social individualism, self aggrandizement, waste, ugliness, and cultural mediocrity which the national purpose critics are so confident in calling temporary lapses from the essential traditions of our past." . . . In the 19th century it was the desire for material gain which made inequality oppressive and not, as Mr. Green says, the reverse. At the same time it is true, as Roland Berthoff has pointed out, that the 20th century has been a century of integration. The rough edges have been smoothed out, men have (whether because they hoped to raise productivity or because they loathed the degradation of human dignity) become more sensitive to the wishes of others, more sensitive to the discrepancy between ideals and practices. . . . Anyone who visits a contemporary city, factory, or corporation suburb must agree that the results of this integration have not always been happy. That is the essence of the wisdom of the 1950's. . . . For all its limitations, vast portions of this integrating process have been carried out in the public sector. Mr. Green dismisses much too blithely social welfare as a legacy of the New Deal. . . .

In the last half of the 1950's, the intellectual community became increasingly convinced that something was wrong with America. The spread of similar convictions in the progressive period and during the 1930's encouraged major changes in the quality of life in this country. The new concern for the "national purpose" has similar potentialities. These potentialities should not be scorned for being inchoate and partial. If we succeed in reaching an arms agreement which makes life on this planet possible, the reformers can afford to make mistakes, to

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waste time, and to suffer Southern Congressmen patiently if not gladly. We cannot, of course, afford to stop working.

SEYMOUR MANDELBAUM
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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

[Philip Green implies] that the unhappy character of our foreign policy—and what the various symposiasts to whom he refers call the lack of national purpose—is due to the greed or self-interest or apathy of men rather than to the character of our political system itself. But it seems to me that perhaps the fault lies in the very structure of our system. . . .

In a Lockian political society the state functions as the mediator of private interests. . . . The state is not the head of an arrow pointing toward some goal but rather the hub of a wheel around which the activities of the society rotate. . . .

If I am right in suggesting that a democracy of the sort which we imagine ourselves to be cannot, insofar as it is such a democracy, develop an external national purpose, where then do nations find such purposes? The answer, I suppose, is that they derive purposes from national traditions, as in the case of de Gaulle and France; or from a policy of imperialistic expansion, as in the case of republican Rome; or from an ideology, as in the case of Soviet Russia; or indeed from all three. The first two of these alternatives are irrelevant to America's international problems and the third, unfortunately, runs contrary to the character of our political system. For it is inconsistent with our conception of a national government as a mediator that it should become the embodiment of and vanguard of a national movement. . . .

Finally, it may be urged that America has muddled through quite well with its political system, and the world could do worse than to try the same techniques. . . . [But] the conception of a state as a mediator presupposes a society which is basically unchanging. In a changing and revolutionary world, what appears as reasonable compromise and accommodation to the powers on the way out, will be unconscionable repression to those riding "the wave of the future." Hence the image of a parliament of nations, while quite relevant to a static Europe, is irrelevant to a changing Africa or Asia.

So I suggest that America's political system makes it impossible for us to develop a substantive national purpose, and the world situation makes irrelevant the one contribution which we might offer, namely the formal or procedural concept of a world political democracy. . . .

ROBERT PAUL WOLFF
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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am in admiring agreement with Philip Green's "National Purpose and New Frontiers" and will simply add several free associations.

(1) As Mr. Green says, it is difficult if not impossible in a climate of egocentric individualism to achieve any but the most immediate group goals in our domestic policy. The New Deal did set a kind of minimum platform below which individual misery would not be allowed to sink—and the general spirit of this century as compared to the last has put limits on corporate greed. We can understand better both the ceiling and the floor of American domestic aspirations when we watch Americans overseas, for these carry, as against the real culture of the home front, quite disparate greeds and idealisms that have little place at home. On the one hand, we have, for example, the sort of American businessman who is more rapacious in Latin America than he would dare to be at home (though not more so and often less so than the native businessmen and *compradors*), or the American GI who is more callous and bigoted, or the Ambassador with a plantation mentality that could hardly survive even in Mississippi. On the other side, we have the idealism of the Peace Corps or of its predecessors, such as Crossroads Africa, and of many dedicated men in the Foreign Service or foreign missions or technical aid. Such men are often homeless in their own country, for one thing because the tasks to which they would like to dedicate themselves seem more manageable abroad than at home, since abroad they have only the natives to cope with and not the American barbarians.

(2) And this leads me to the more general hypothesis that America, of all the industrial nations, seems to me to produce at once the most cruel and mean-spirited of men and the most generous and truly humane. The struggle for affluence creates, not only in the first but in later generations, a rivalrousness and *Lebensneide* that of course one also finds elsewhere, but that in this

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country has enormous cultural support in the mass media, in our sports, and in our political life. The search for national purpose, seen in narrow terms of the cold war, gives many vindictive Americans the same sort of outlet that Southern racist ideology gives the hoodlum mobs as well as the slightly more respectable White Citizens Councils. I recommend a reading of letters to the editor on the Tractors for Cuba exchange as an indication of how many Americans are now waiting to fire on Fort Sumter: I refer here, not to Cuba per se, but to a jingo attitude to the cold war as a whole.

The Sino-Soviet bloc can be relied upon to behave in such a way as to strengthen the compulsions and support the rationalizations of these groups. In this situation, I am not sanguine as to how the "Great Debate" that Mr. Green calls for would come out. The "disciplined, crisis-oriented permanent cold war mobilization" about which he speaks seems to me not very disciplined—hardly more so than the forces of "law and order" in Birmingham or Montgomery—nor do I see in what political party Mr. Green will find the cadres of the poverty-stricken and underprivileged on whom he seems to count in looking for creative domestic discord.

But as already indicated, I do see many extraordinarily sensitive and decent Americans, often immobilized by their very qualities, but not always so—witness the Peace Corps volunteers (to whom Mr. Green refers) or the men who are willing to risk beatings and worse to protest illegal segregation or legal but suicidal civil defense measures or missile bases. Whether they withdraw or whether they protest, these people have risen above avarice and above parochial and nationalistic slogans. Even so, if there could be a debate in which their voices would be heard and not drowned out by the catcalls of the mass media and the mob spirit of the chauvinistic, I'm not sure they would know what to say. Like Mr. Green, they know what is tawdry and unreal in the calls to national unity, but their own idealism tends to be inchoate and unspecific; and as yet they are far, not only from any semblance of power, but also from any vision of what genuine democracy and true community would look like.

DAVID RIESMAN
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MR. GREEN *writes*:

Mr. Mandelbaum and I are in thorough disagreement. For the most part this seems to be a matter of differing attitudes and biases which are not worth arguing about. However, a few of his statements, which purport to be based on an objective analysis of the historical record, deserve more extensive comment.

(1) "The burden of proof lies heavy on the social scientist who contends . . ." etc. For a start, how about Soviet Russia, which shows no signs of disintegration? Or ancient Greece and Rome, with their quiescent slave populations? In these cases, of course, the element of coercion is involved, and no doubt we instinctively associate suppression of conflict with some kind of force, but the burden of proof lies heavy on the social scientist who would limit the term only to its visible evidences. To do the job in America, we use, among other techniques, the polite fiction of freedom and equality, which is instilled into every schoolchild from kindergarten on, and the delusion of participation in the pursuit of wealth. I say delusion for the reason that the participants are diverted to battle with each other (*vide* the sometime alliance of industry and labor on behalf of protective tariffs; the use of racism to keep wages down; the dispossession of unskilled coal miners by machinery with the acquiescence of their union) rather than with those who preach the gospel of competition from their positions of power. In our day the plumbers, electricians, steelworkers, etc., climb into the middle class over the backs of the millions of unorganized and poorly organized workers whose plight Sidney Lens describes in *The Crisis of American Labor*. Meanwhile, the business class has not been notably discommoded in this century—not even by the New Deal, which was as much a conserving, stabilizing revolution as a reforming one. (Mr. Mandelbaum should study some of the recent literature on taxation to see just how little the wealthy contribute, comparatively, to the welfare state.)

Current sociology, in fact, is full of descriptions of this process. (The best is by Ralf Dahrendorf in his *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*.) Sociologists, who tend professionally to approve of "integration" and "stability," use positive phrases like "melioration of class conflict" to describe it, but they are talking about the same thing as Mr. Mandelbaum and myself. Thus I know of no reason to accept Mr. Mandelbaum's statement about pressure

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groups, other than that he has made it. Pressure groups *express* some conflicts, *divert* others, and completely *repress* still others. (In the United States, sections of the labor movement have from time to time even functioned as agents of *direct* resistance to desired social change.) A society in which *all* latent social conflict was being expressed is almost unimaginable, no doubt, but there is no particular reason for, or virtue in, our being as far as we are from that state. Certainly stability and integration are only to be desired if one likes the results; it is a matter of whose ox is being gored. The "wisdom of the 50's" indeed!

(2) I don't really understand the last half of Mr. Mandelbaum's letter. He seems to be saying that I "misread" American history because it's been more benign than I think it has been. Well, perhaps, though I don't see how one can "misread" such things; they are matters of opinion primarily. But in any event, if Mr. Mandelbaum is trying to assert that "integration" has proceeded far enough so that the time is ripe for the creation or re-creation of the American "purpose," I think he is wrong.

In the first place, his so-called integration is sadly incomplete, and frankly, I cannot have much concern for the supposed "purpose" of a nation that appears as ready as this one is to tolerate its extensive remaining areas of gross social inequity. In the second place, what integration there is has largely come about through income redistribution (though we would all like to believe otherwise at times), and a study of the relevant figures will show that our major income redistribution in this century has chiefly been the product of *wars,* not New Deals and progressive movements. I feel something less than ready to fight World War III, or even a prolonged cold war, in order to start the process up again; that kind of reform we have had enough of. Finally, I challenge Mr. Mandelbaum's assertion, if I have understood it correctly, as a simple matter of fact. At the risk of repeating myself: American society is *not* unified enough underneath for its members to cooperate on a rational foreign policy. (Mr. Wolff makes this point very well.) I predict, on the contrary, that as long as the cold war continues, the U.S. will find no national unity except in an irrational quasi-militarist foreign policy with authoritarian domestic overtones. As for Mr. Mandelbaum's dream of disarmament-cum-reform, most of the "reformers" who are currently in charge of our "reform" party would resign their seats and take to the fallout shelters with machine guns rather than sign the only kind of disarmament agreement we are likely to get.

Mr. Wolff's comments are a welcome addition to my article. I did not mean, of course, to imply that the problems of American foreign policy to which he refers are due to the nature of *man,* but rather that those problems are due (in part) to the nature of Americans *as their character has been molded by the American social system.* This is what Mr. Wolff must ultimately mean when he talks about the "system," since systems cannot "have" faults or virtues by themselves; rather, different social systems encourage the development of different human faults and virtues, which have their effect in human behavior. Thus the first half of Mr. Wolff's last paragraph is really a precise summary of the viewpoint I was presenting in my article.

That one is going to lose a debate is no reason to avoid it—not if what one has to say is really important. To reply more concretely to Professor Riesman, I suppose I mean that the "sensitive and decent Americans" ought to find some way of making common cause with the "underprivileged," if these are indeed two separate classes. If there is no political party within which cadres can be found to accomplish this, so much the worse for the political parties. Perhaps if some "sensitive, decent" person were able to plan and inspire a rent strike by New York's slum dwellers, or a "sit-in" at our major factories by unemployed workers (until they were given jobs), something would come of it—I see no apparent reason why direct action should be limited to educated Negroes. We can worry about the precise ingredients of a true community later; the immediate problem is to rectify inequalities. As for the cold war, the issues are undoubtedly terribly complicated, as Mr. Riesman suggests, but that merely means that intellectuals should spend more time thinking about a practical means of opposition to the psychological climate that makes the cold war seem inevitable, and that they should give the results of their thought as much currency as possible. The only reason that the protestants often don't know quite how to make sense is that RAND has so far coopted the field. Hard scholarly thought should not be a monopoly of the Defense Department; nor should subtle propaganda.

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SIX AMERICAN POETS*

Harold Rosenberg

GINSBERG'S "KADDISH" is a take-off on the Jewish prayer for the dead, not as it is printed in the prayer book but as it might occur in the mind of a contemporary mourner. As psychological fact, the *yisgadal* (exaltation of the Holy Name), which is the substance of the prayer, would become in a man of our time a resonance of large incoherent references. Within this metaphysical blur appears a series of scenes flashing from the memory. This is the form of Ginsberg's "Kaddish": it invokes "Death," "Apocalypse," "the Buddhist Book of Answers," "Beings in a Dream," and inside of these sets episodes from the life of his mother.

The poet's recollections of Naomi Ginsberg are terrible. Neither science nor kindness could save her; to think of her is to face an existence that drowns slowly in drabness and pain. Naomi came from Russia to the Lower East Side as a little girl, grew up in the family candy store in Newark, became a left-winger, married, suffered a nervous breakdown, then went mad, deteriorated dreadfully both physically and morally, and died at close to sixty in a lunatic asylum on Long Island. It was the anguish and degradation of her later life that the poet grew up in from boyhood on, and which he recalls most vividly. What thought shall justify such a history? On his last visit to his mother, she no longer recognized him, but a few days after her death he received a letter she had written him: "The key is in the window," the madwoman wrote, "the key is in the sunlight at the window . . . the key is in the bars, in the sunlight in the window." In the repeated phrases, with their intimation of light and joy within the prison of the hallucinated mind, Ginsberg has read a sibylline message.

Symbolic fumbling as a substitute for religion, or as its content, is not unusual in modern literature. The "key" of hallucination, however, is more evident in Ginsberg's other poems than it is in "Kaddish," the triumph of which is in the awful data it puts down without transcendence, neither that of metaphor nor of concept. Naomi Ginsberg stands before us as she was and as her son was forced to endure her, an enigma of misery which cannot be escaped. Of any life it is necessary to be able to say something. Mrs. Ginsberg's not only defies philosophy, it was passed in an environment not yet assimilated into literature; so that our language, our grammar even, cannot take hold of it but acts rather to exclude it from our consciousness or to transform it automatically into something more acceptable. To evoke his mother, Ginsberg had to break the language barrier, to force his way through the inherent respectabilities of style to the deplorable, alien, senseless, often nauseating fact. To do this took moral courage, as well as a certain degree of frenzy; it also took a good deal of literary skill and cunning. To speak of Naomi truly, i.e., passionately, it was necessary to renew the written language with that which flows through the brain from the street in the unfiltered immediacy of feeling; and the way to restrain this flow from spilling into chaos was to make use of the devices and mannerisms of the 20th-century literary revolt against formality, such as dropping punctuation, introducing

* A review of *Kaddish and Other Poems*, by Allen Ginsberg (City Lights Books, 100 pp., $1.50); *White Sun Black Sun*, by Jerome Rothenberg (Hawk's Well Press, 39 pp., 75¢); *Say Pardon*, by David Ignatow (Wesleyan University Press, 76 pp., cloth $3.50, paper $1.25); *mountain, fire, thornbush*, by Harvey Shapiro (Alan Swallow, 29 pp., 75¢); *Halfway*, by Maxine W. Kumin (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 106 pp., $3.95); *Horatio*, by Hyam Plutzik (Atheneum, 89 pp., $4.00).

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numerals and typewriter symbols, allowing lines to run over, turning lists into litanies. In sum, to reproduce the unique texture of lower-middle-class Jewish life in New Jersey required the collaboration of the Paris Left Bank, on the one hand, and of Walt Whitman, W. C. Williams, and other celebrators of the American noun, on the other. This feat of aesthetic diplomacy Ginsberg accomplished in "Kaddish" with a minimum of self-consciousness, and one can almost laud him for having found a way to *rant* again in poetry—

Back! You! Naomi! Skull on you! Gaunt immortality and revolution come—small broken woman—the ashen indoor eyes of hospitals, ward greyness on skin—

as if the Elizabethans too had been brought to the party and not in the costumes laid out for them in current English Lit.

In its envelopment of the undiminished fact, Ginsberg's elegy is undoubtedly his most serious creation to date. The other poems in *Kaddish* are a comedown, though "At Appolinaire's Grave" is by ordinary standards, or what should be ordinary, an excellent poetic meditation, a piece of which I thought more highly than of "Kaddish" at a time when I had read only fragments of the latter. When he writes without a passionate theme, Ginsberg tries to play the word wizard, either with or without the "key" of narcotics, but his prosy rhetoric is too relaxed to initiate miracles, and he is too conscious of his public even in solitude to give himself to the ripening of visionary images. For a philosophy Ginsberg has only the semi-jocular arrogance of the poet as world-creator—

I rarely have an egg for breakfast tho my work requires infinite eggs to come to birth in Eternity—

and his religious moods are spangled with snippets of Zen, Christian brotherly love (freshened up with Eros), and post-Rimbaud "mysteries" of criminal saintliness and saintliness of crime. The emotional shocks he received in childhood, plus fear of life-sapping routines pursued from an empty sense of duty, seem to have robbed him of the feeling of being related to an existing world; his imagination either remains fastened to childhood or leaps over the present into self-induced trances conceived as a "widening of consciousness." Though full of impulses toward overthrow, he lacks the sentiment for action, either his own or other people's (there is vilification in his poems but no conflict and no enemy), and his political outlook is a composite of ready-made-radicalisms-good-for-a-cheer and inversions of platitudes of the mass media, done much more wittily by Cummings thirty years ago.

For all his lacks, however, Ginsberg shares the power of those writers whose imagination does not stop at the edge of the page. Having returned to that poetic tradition which seeks forms in the structure of happenings rather than in the rearrangement of inherited patterns, Ginsberg almost single-handedly rescued poetry for his generation from the dungeons of the university monks engaged in grinding it to dust. With him American poetry once more copes with Newark or frees us from it.

JEROME ROTHENBERG also shies away from the meter and emblem manipulations of the academies toward the Continental word magicians. Translator of French, Spanish, German, and Latin American surrealists, as well as of primitive and devotional poems from several languages (does he really know Arabic?), Rothenberg in his own verse owes the largest debt to the surrealist image and mood, with perhaps special obligation—women, horses, roses—to Lorca.

The women rock in dark chairs.
In the windy living room, naked, their clothes thrown over the floor
They lift glasses filled with white chalk.

Rothenberg holds more closely to theme than the older surrealists, the penalty for a style too consciously acquired. He is "purer" verbally than Ginsberg and might therefore aspire to greater lyrical intensity, but he lacks the latter's associative or affective range. He has undertaken a more manageable enterprise in that he limits use of New York City references to the toning of "non-poetic" words into the continuous echo of his surrealist predecessors. For example, "A Poem for a Small Manufacturer" begins

King of a garden of seashells and dresses
he passes the rivers of cloth
with their shining spindles.

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"Rivers of cloth" is almost literal, if not cliché, but the effort of the whole is toward visionary metaphor—the literalness is even more pronounced in "When I Think We Will All Be Dead." Though Rothenberg, like a latter-day Cabbalist, regards poetry as a means for summoning up a "deep image" (he has been using this term as a slogan in his interesting miniature magazine, *The Floating World*), surrealist irrationality does not seem to fit him correctly. Besides, the official surrealist formula for bringing the hidden to the surface through the disintegrated and jammed image has grown increasingly ineffective, like the fading potency of DDT; by this time, dissociation often sounds like a parody.

In the subways of water
the president
talks with his mice.

Weary as this is, Rothenberg is able at times to draw out images which, whether "deep" or not, do have a tactile reality:

. . . the rain of wet dollars
pours through my shirt . . .

This poet is, in sum, one with whom the ability to choose between the superficially attractive and the genuine will be decisive; for when

Black horses race through my heart
in the rain

it is time to look the gift in the mouth, while when

something brushes against my arm,
some owl

there is assurance of having been touched, even if the reader doesn't know by what.

BOTH GINSBERG and Rothenberg stem from the tradition of changing the world through the magic of language. For David Ignatow words lack this power; however, the world as it is contains wonders enough. The difference is between the wizard and the believer. In bare, everyday language (Ignatow joins Ginsberg in bowing to W. C. Williams), unadorned by either jargon or tropes, the poet outlines brief abstract dramas, like entries in the *Diaries* of Kafka. "The Manager" begins:

I want no balking, no hesitation
as to my meaning, not even
at the slightest pressure
of my thumb, and I will not feel
miserable about it.

Here, will has been generalized to the very edge of consciousness, uncovering a complex of tensions comparable to that underlying a dream. One thinks of a poetry of spells denuded of content which would, in arising out of a super-sharpened alertness, be the opposite of those induced by drugs or letting go. Ignatow's wonder is of the kind that comes into being through isolating a face, an item in the newspaper, the motions of someone absorbed in his job. In my opinion, his gray, wiry puzzles reflect more accurately the irrationality of New York City experience than does the glowing mass of surrealist-fused images.

Like Ginsberg's, Ignatow's most ambitious poem (though less than two pages in length, it is the longest in the book) is an elegy for a frustrated life, in this case that of a cousin who wanted to be an artist but was confined and battered down by the dreary environment of poor Jews in New York. Like Ginsberg's, too, Ignatow's lament is for himself as well as for the mourned one, for that part of him which in becoming a poet he recognized to be dead.

I too emerged
from a hardening womb.

The common ground of the three poets we have discussed so far is the poverty of life in the big city; it is that which precipitates their verse toward religion: with Ginsberg to belief in a god who cannot be invoked without shouts of derision ("Blessed by he in Paranoia!"); with Rothenberg to devotionals to the image steeped in divinity; with Ignatow to a diffident worship, whose explicitness at times diminishes his poetic insight, e.g., "The Rightful One," but which can also inspire the strong clarity (despite its awkward line) of

I shall follow
as the shadow that has mountains
in its path

ALONE AMONG THE POETS in this group Harvey Shapiro is advertised as a religious poet whose poems have appeared in COM-

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MENTARY and *Midstream,* though there is testimony, too, to his secular vanguardism in that he has also contributed to *Chelsea Review* and *New Directions.* To be both religious and "modern" carries a double guarantee of respect for the irrational and, to be sure, Mr. Shapiro's book opens with an eloquent characterization of "The Destructive Will":

This, then, is the child's wish:
To see the earth a dancing flood
And the new home floating free,
And all irrational, outside, inside.

Mr. Shapiro's regard for chaos is, however, a negative one. Mr. Ginsberg would not call the irrational "destructive" or if he did he would see it as the destructive-creative; in another mood he might not give a damn what it was so long as it set things "floating free." Perhaps the difference in their estimations of unreason accounts for the opinion of a reviewer in the New York *Times,* a publication more or less programmatically opposed to "expressionism" in the arts, that Ginsberg is no poet at all while Harvey Shapiro is a master of religious verse. At any rate, Shapiro takes his stand on orthodoxy, which is putting "the child's wish" in its place, and consistently with this position his poems tend to be regular in form, literal in diction, and centered on traditional symbols.

What then is "modern" about *mountain, fire, thornbush* (we shall not hold the author accountable for the lower case)? Perhaps that Jews are a modern subject, and Shapiro writes about nothing but Jews. Also, in "Death of a Grandmother" (another elegy!) there is a realism different from most of the book in its talk of slums and sex (this would be my pick for *Chelsea Review*). Above all, Mr. Shapiro's confession of resignation toward art, passion, revelation—

How everything gets tamed.
The pronomial outcry, as if uttered in ecstasy,
Is turned into syntax. We are
Only a step from discursive prose
When the voice speaks from the thornbush—

is a conscious contemporary attitude, offered as rebuttal in the debate with poetic radicalism. Mr. Ginsberg, it says, your Key will open nothing but a cubicle in the literary mausoleum.

MAXINE W. KUMIN IS another poet who appeals across the board of taste in a range even wider than Shapiro's, from *Ladies Home Journal* and the *New Yorker* to *Partisan Review* and *Contact* (do they still talk of the alienation of intellectuals?). Mrs. Kumin's verses demonstrate that a style has been evolved in which the gap between vanguard and traditional has been effectively closed, so that attributing intrinsic virtue or deficiencies (*vide* Karl Shapiro) to either one or the other has become factitious. In poetry as in politics, the days are over when one could *be* a radical; now, specific acts and ideas have to be evaluated. Mrs. Kumin's poetic behavior is analogous to that of the perfect liberal: having developed an up-to-date instrument for descriptive verse out of an amalgam of progressive styles, she is calm, intelligent, well-read, imaginative without losing touch with the subject, humorous without cruelty, capable of fantasy without turning grotesque. Enjoying a ballad with the delightful mimicry of her "fraulein reads instructive rhymes," one almost forgets that poetry is no longer a form of entertainment. With equal facility she works in free verse, in rhyme patterns complex as acrostics, even in lines and letters arranged for visual effect. "Casablanca," which recalls the movie with Humphrey Bogart, is a first-rate display of post-Imagism. Of the poets we have been considering, Mrs. Kumin has unquestionably the most talent, in the precise meaning of a natural aptitude for performing excellently within already-defined forms. Whether in our epoch talent furthers creation or has become an obstacle to it is a grand problem, which we cannot go into here. Suffice it to say that Mrs. Kumin shows none of that "organized bad taste," to use an old term of Kenneth Burke's, so prevalent in the major art of our time.

Mrs. Kumin has no bohemian vices or minority scars. Her "Jewish heritage" mentioned in the blurb is not that of the slums nor even of the big city but is a biographical detail coupled with her "love of the turbulent New England coast." Her themes are picturesque and out-of-doors: swimming, picnicking, ice-skating. One might wonder why the Jewish fact was brought up at all; it does not affect her rhetoric and enters her subject matter only through such *New*

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Yorker-ish exotica as "our lop-eared Menorah . . . the membrane scrolls of Torah" in a poem of friendship to a Chinese who had comparable objects in his background and loved chopped liver and lox. Her poem to Passover, major statement in the collection, is equally a poem to Easter and to a rite of the Bakonga, the blended style perfectly mirroring a blended humanity.

I say myths knit the world up when men die for love.

HYAM PLUTZIK'S *Horatio* is on the extreme right of the poetic spectrum, "right" meaning a belief that poetry is a realm of its own in which eternal masterpieces loom as models for all the ages. Interpreting *Hamlet,* Mr. Plutzik tries to sound as much as possible like Shakespeare:

Such grief is contra naturam, *against God,*
Who marks all men for death . . . etc.

Technique is synonymous with metering fine phrases like "bouncing doxies," "dead men's bones," "nameless deeds." Neither the streets of Brooklyn, where he was born, nor the efforts of the past one hundred years in literature have any place in Mr. Plutzik's literary time-capsule; it never occurred to him, for instance, that in fulfilling Hamlet's dying plea to tell his story Horatio might more legitimately have wound up in the library scene in Joyce's *Ulysses* than in listening to talking animals around a campfire.

Artificial episodes in artificial situations are enacted in artificial dialogue. Such writing constitutes a kind of daydreaming and in that sense is contemporary in spite of itself. The trouble is that, hedged in on all sides by masterworks, it has no outlet either to the open air or to the depths of the author's self. Plutzik's poem is so crowded with arbitrarily chosen symbols that *Hamlet* itself is far less opaque by contrast.

THOUGH ALL THESE poets are Jewish, they are about as representative aesthetically of what is going on in American poetry today as any group that might have published volumes during the same period. Those among them who believe that the poet ought to bring to his work his own odor and noise do so as unself-consciously as would persons of any different background. What is new in this respect is the increasing number of American Jewish writers who show no special eagerness to Americanize themselves, that is, to academicize themselves into literary gentlemen without marks of origin. This taking oneself for granted is the best indication that Jewish cultural naturalization has been accomplished. Most important is the fact that it has been achieved on not-too-uneven terms as part of the process of America's own cultural self-naturalization.

RATIONAL RELIGION

A FAITH FOR MODERNS. By ROBERT GORDIS. *Bloch. 316 pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by MARVIN FOX

ONE OF THE MERITS of the existentialist emphasis in current theological discussions is its avoidance of apologetics. For the religious existentialist the word "modern" holds no special charm nor does it present any special threat. He sees clearly that science and modernity—whatever these terms mean—are not the real obstacles to religious faith. Contemporary man is kept from religious commitment by many internal forces, both personal and intellectual. But he is not, by and large, in need of evidence that one can be both "modern" and "religious." Theology, happily, has moved far beyond this stage.

In the context of current religious thought, then, this book by Dr. Robert Gordis—who has achieved a highly-deserved reputation as an eminent Bible scholar—seems almost anachronistic. In his "warning" to readers he takes up the question of who might be his audience: the orthodox believers have no intellectual problems—a strange conception of orthodoxy—and thus have no need of his help; the existentialists, on the other hand, have presumably rejected reason and its claims, and are, as a result, beyond help. The book is rather for those who share the author's conviction "that reason and faith are not antagonists, but partners in comprehending the world." These are the people who "are unwilling to withdraw from the world or resign from the 20th century," people who "are in search

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for a rational basis" for religion. To these seekers Dr. Gordis offers "a religious view of life that will be tenable for modern men and women, whatever their formal religious affiliation, or even if they have none." One wonders who and where these men and women are. For if they are intelligent and serious enough to attempt this fairly demanding book, they are likely to have discovered that no serious religious thinker rejects completely the proper demands of reason, nor "withdraws" from his own age.

Now, religious apologetics always faces a strategic and tactical dilemma. If the apologist closes his eyes to the strengths of the opposing position, he loses the trust of his readers. But if he states his opponent's position in its strongest terms, he risks making it more persuasive than his own. Gordis has been keenly sensitive to this danger. Unhappily, however, he has only succeeded in weakening the claims of religion. In most of the main issues with which he deals, religion emerges a poor second, a situation which is not helped by the author's shifts to strong rhetoric or inspirational sermonics.

Some examples are in order. Science, we are told, teaches us the "true nature of man and his world." This one admission by itself makes philosophy and theology superfluous. If we know from science the nature of man and the world, theological and philosophical inquiry into these subjects becomes unnecessary and futile. It is astonishing to find a teacher of religion so zealous in his conception of the scope of science; very few contemporary scientists would go as far as Dr. Gordis in advancing its claims.

His position leads to some curious, but inevitable, results. Since the views of science on almost all questions are supposed to be granted absolute validity, we can either struggle to fit religious doctrine to these views or else abandon religion; Dr. Gordis chooses the former way and pays a heavy price for it. With respect to human nature he affirms the correctness of the biologists' claim "that all life is a unit and man is only the highest known element on the evolutionary ladder." In his scientific enthusiasm Dr. Gordis assures us that "the impersonal conclusion of modern biological science that man is simply a higher level in evolution was anticipated by traditional religion." As evidence he cites the verse: "Have we not all one Father, hath not one God created us!" (Certainly a Bible scholar of Dr. Gordis's stature and distinction owes us some explanation of his unprecedented reading of this passage.)

But no one speaking in behalf of traditional religion can really hold such a conception of human nature: from the very beginning the Bible lays the strongest emphasis on man's absolute uniqueness. To satisfy the demand of religious thought, therefore, Dr. Gordis shifts his position, with no apparent embarrassment, and reminds us that "God created man in His image." He speaks of "the intimate bond which links God and man"—a bond which he does not suppose to link God and the earthworm—and he affirms his belief in "the sanctity of the individual, the dignity and significance of man, of every man, not merely in the mass, but also in the particular." The most ingenious dialectical skill can neither extract these theological doctrines from the view—nor make them consistent with the view—that science teaches us the true nature of man and that man is merely one more link in the chain of evolution.

We can see more clearly the source of Dr. Gordis's difficulty if we consider his assertion that "An enlightened religious approach will . . . find it a challenge and an opportunity to reconsider its fundamentals and to bring them into harmony with what is true and life-giving in the new advance of science." But precisely how do we determine what is true in the sciences? By the scientific method? Then everything that has survived the rigor of this method is true, and this means the entire body of established scientific knowledge. Yet Dr. Gordis, like every student of the philosophy of science, knows the serious problems that have to be faced in establishing a solid ground for the methods and the results of scientific inquiry. To speak of what is "true" in the sciences without further definition is to speak so loosely that one might include everything or nothing that goes under the name of scientific knowledge. Even moderately sophisticated scientists are usually careful to avoid such language; they prefer to present their conclusions as tentative, and are sensitive to the need to avoid problems which they are incapable of handling *qua* scientists. As to

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the question of what is "life-giving"—how can one hope to bring religion into harmony with concepts that are vague almost to the point of being meaningless? The real question, of course, is why religion should accept the prior and superior claim of this vague notion of scientific knowledge altogether?

DR. GORDIS'S EXTREME commitment to scientific rigor cools somewhat when he turns to the evidence for the existence of God. He bases his case largely on the argument from design: from the apparent fact of order in the world, he concludes that there is an intelligent and purposeful Orderer. His version of this classical argument is a direct violation of his own conception of scientific doctrine. As he explicitly acknowledges: "We have no experience of origins, only of operations. We know nothing and therefore can hazard little more than guesses regarding the origins of the universe as a whole." This is sound scientific doctrine. Yet Dr. Gordis violates his own canons when he affirms that in the order of the universe we find evidence for God's existence. He argues that, "It is surely a reasonable assumption that what has an origin has an Originator." Now, since this proposition deals with origins it cannot be empirical. So much was granted earlier. If it is taken to be self-evident, then it is merely a linguistic tautology. If it is not tautological, then no argument can be made for the view that "origin" implies "originator," and certainly none can be made for the claim that "origin" implies "Originator" with a capital "O."

When he tries to strengthen the argument from design by apparently scientific means, Dr. Gordis's reasoning and use of statistics are misleading. He sets forth statistical data meant to prove that the very existence of the earth and of life on earth are incomprehensible unless there is an intelligent being who designed and created the universe. He points out, for example, that if the earth were much smaller or much larger it would be subject to temperatures and atmospheric pressures that would make life impossible, and decides that it is miraculous that the earth is just the right size. Actually all he succeeds in demonstrating is that the earth, like everything else, is as it is. In principle it is no more surprising that the earth can sustain life than that other planets cannot.

Then in a further effort to marshall empirical evidence for God, Dr. Gordis points out that the odds against the occurrence of all the conditions under which life arises are 10^{160} to 1, and concludes that, "To try to explain it all through the mechanism of chance seems preposterous." He forgets that these processes are taking place in an infinite time with an infinite number of chances. It is no more preposterous to suppose that the particular events leading to the development of life occurred by chance than it is miraculous that any particular event takes place. If one were to have calculated a thousand years ago the antecedent probability that a man named John F. Kennedy would be standing where he was at noon on January 20, 1961, saying particular words, dressed in a particular morning coat, etc., the odds against this would probably be as great as the odds that life arose by chance.

The position of the believer who denies that science can enlighten us about our ultimate origins, and therefore makes no attempt to claim scientific support, is both more honest and more tenable. Its holder acknowledges that his belief is an act of faith, beyond all empirical evidence—an act of faith on which he stakes his life. Every contemporary religion must indeed take account of and come to terms with established scientific knowledge, or else it degenerates into obscurantism. However, no Western religion, certainly not Judaism or Christianity, can commit itself in advance to science as its basic framework without being caught in an impossible snare. And what is perplexing about Dr. Gordis's commitment is that neither intelligence, nor modernity, nor science itself demands it.

AFRICA—IN THEORY

THE POLITICAL KINGDOM IN UGANDA. By DAVID E. APTER. *Princeton University Press. 498 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by WALTER SCHWARZ

DECOLONIZATION IN AFRICA proceeds no less importantly in the fields of scholarship and culture than in politics, but the process is slower. It is possible to withdraw a sovereign administration and grant independence on

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a single day, but the refashioning of intellectual attitudes can scarcely be achieved in a generation. On a general cultural level, one difficulty is to avoid value judgments based on equating power and technology with worth. In scholarship, the problem is to banish the notion that African history really began with the European presence and that, because independent Africa has to "modernize" itself in order to survive, its problems must be interpreted from the standpoint of an "advanced" society. The old attitudes are still prevalent both in Europe, as the survivals of the colonial relationship, and in America, as a political naivety which measures "progress" by the yardsticks of "democracy" or "freedom" or material standard of living. They are prevalent among Africans too, of course, because the emergent elite in politics and culture is European-educated: the result, very often, is a painful form of schizophrenia. The dilemma is seen in such organizations as *Présence Africaine,* a publishing house formed in Paris by a group of Europeanized, Francophilic Africans, mostly with Parisian addresses and Parisian wives, dedicated to the propagation of the concept of *négritude.* Similarly President Nkrumah of Ghana, who has recently made arrangements for government supervision of the university, speaks of the "African personality"; President Sekou Touré of Guinea vigorously denies any imputation of Communism because "we have no isms but Africanism." In the moderate, pro-Western regimes like Senegal, there is an insistence that the application of socialism only conforms with traditional village practice.

In British scholarship a "new wave" of thinking is typified by Professor Thomas Hodkin, who has recently suggested that "it might be a good thing if we gave up trying to say or write anything [about Africa] in the next few years, and concentrate instead upon observing, learning, thinking, understanding within the limits of our capacities." In a recent issue of *Encounter* he wrote: "We are deplorably ignorant about the past of the various African peoples and states. Moreover, what we think we know is largely wrong. . . . The study of African history is only now beginning to develop its proper methods of inquiry, its critical standards, and the authority that is the consequence of these." In the U.S., the recent detailed study of *The Emerging States of French Equatorial Africa,* by Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, typifies, in this context, the old approach. In twenty-five painstaking chapters, admirably objective and well written, these ancient areas are measured, inch by inch, against yardsticks fashioned by a civilization which has impinged a mere fifty years there.

IN THE PRESENT WORK, *The Political Kingdom in Uganda,* David Apter starts from an awareness of this problem. "Profound though contact with the West has been, Africa can no longer be viewed as a consequence of European institutions planted on exotic soil," he writes. "In the history of Africa, the colonial period is but a moment of time." He sees the problems of Uganda as representing a "phenomenon in Africa which has been much overlooked as the successes of secular nationalism have naturally focused our attention on anti-colonialism. Uganda raises the question of what shall remain when colonialism departs. What are the stubborn and persistent forces of an accommodated traditionalism which will remain in the new Africa, to be absorbed or not as time and wisdom decree?" His object is to dissect a system of political relationships inherent in a highly traditionalized and conservative society on the eve of political independence and to find in this system pointers for the future course of development. He says at one point that Uganda's problems "are not interesting from a merely theoretical point of view." However, he is a theorist by trade—associate professor of political science at the University of Chicago—and his book is a web of theory. The test of its usefulness is how far his classifications and abstractions are relevant to Uganda and Africa.

His thesis is that Uganda has a very different pattern of development from other countries, notably Ghana, the subject of his previous study, *The Gold Coast in Transition.* According to classifications which he derived with the assistance of students in a seminar, he labels societies such as those of Ghana or Guinea *mobilization systems,* which "mobilize the total energies, resources, and skills of the country for a grand assault on the problems of poverty, ignorance, and

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backwardness." Others, such as the Federation of Nigeria and the ex-Federation of Mali, he calls *consociations,* which "seek political unity in a common denominator to unite all the groups within the country for the purpose of common action." The third type, exemplified in the Buganda kingdom, the most important of the four kingdoms that make up Uganda, he calls a *modernizing autocracy,* in which "change is filtered down through the medium of traditional institutions." Morocco and Ethiopia are given as other examples. Then, like some contrapuntal composer intoxicated by a theme, Apter draws up an elaborate list of characteristics belonging to each system. The *mobilization system* has "hierarchical authority," "total allegiance," "tactical flexibility," "unitarianism," and "ideological specialization." The *consociational* has "pyramidical authority," "multiple loyalties," "necessity for compromise," "pluralism," "ideological diffuseness." The *modernizing autocracy* has "hierarchical authority," "exclusivism," "strategic flexibility," "unitarianism," and "neo-traditionalism." The ingenious catalogue swells in a crescendo of abstractions until the earth, Africa, and even plain English are left far behind: ". . . a hierarchical pattern of authority without intermediate and relatively autonomous sources of power . . . a set of roles and institutions which can be summarized as being essentially instrumental in their orientations. . . ."

MEASURED AGAINST political realities, these classifications are not always helpful: sometimes they are inappropriate, inaccurate, irrelevant, or tautological. Buganda's brand of militant reaction, for example, is more of an oligarchy than an autocracy. To include in the category *modernizing autocracy* three such different countries as Buganda, whose archiac brand of nationalism is likely to be overthrown within a few years of independence; Ethiopia, feudalistic and reactionary; and Morocco, so militantly nationalist as to be included in the Ghana-Guinea group in African politics—shows up the distinction as devoid of any precise meaning. Nor is it illuminating to list such qualities as "pluralism," "multiple loyalties," and "the necessity of compromise" as features of the *consociational system.* They are too obvious: and is not the necessity for compromise a feature of all governments? Even Sekou Touré of Guinea and Nkrumah of Ghana must maintain a balance between the radicals and the moderates, the extremists and the pro-Westerners, the doctrinaires and the pragmatists, the townsfolk and the farmers.

One might justifiably react to Apter's excess of theory in a general way and claim that it makes nonsense of politics. But in Africa today such theorizing is especially unhelpful. If one thing stands out from the array of regimes and alignments in independent Africa, it is the lack of rigidity, the blurring of frontiers between one "type" and another. Even where a "system" seems clear cut, it is not necessarily stable. Apter's enlightened starting point in this study is betrayed by a curious naivety. "Each of the three types has developed as a result of the challenge which has emerged with lightning speed: the extension of political democracy and freedom to Asia and Africa. This has ended the Western world's political hegemony and affirmed instead the road to both spiritual and material achievements in Asia and Africa." In fact, democracy in Africa is limited by much the same considerations that apply in Soviet Russia: the need to achieve quick results in a society that has no democratic tradition. "Freedom" is a largely meaningless term in this context; so is "spiritual achievements."

Yet African "systems" are not only more different but also more similar than Apter conceives of them. They are alike in that all contain the same double revolution in progress or in embryo: the revolt against the colonial power and the revolt of the "have-nots" against "haves." On the surface this latter revolution is more advanced in Ghana and Guinea than in Nigeria and Senegal, but in practice the new elites in the radical countries are as divorced in wealth and power from the people as the Nigerian merchant or Senegalese bureaucrat. After independence, Uganda will be no exception; despite the elaborately conservative traditions which Apter describes with skill and insight, the same pressures will be exerted there, and the traditionalism which has kept it apart from the mainstream of nationalism will founder. Who will care, then, whether it is a *modernizing autocracy* or a *mobilization system?*

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POPULAR JEWS

MILA 18. By LEON URIS. *Doubleday. 539 pp. $4.95.*

Reviewed by MIDGE DECTER

THE CAREER OF Mr. Leon Uris tells a curious literary and cultural story. It might at first not seem worthy of note that a gifted writer of hard-core trash should three times out of the last four have made the best-seller lists in America—even though the times have accustomed us to somewhat different standards of book popularity. It might also seem quite natural that sooner or later such a writer would turn his talents to blood-and-thunder novels about illegal immigration to Israel and Jewish resistance to the Nazis in Warsaw: these are exciting subjects which only, as it turned out, needed someone of sufficiently strong stomach to make fictions out of them.

Mr. Uris, however, has done a great deal more than merely wax rich and famous—possibilities, after all, open to any American whose commodity finds its proper market. He has become the master chronicler and ambassador of Jewish aspiration not only to the Gentiles but to the Jews themselves. His commodity has in fact found a market far out of proportion, numerically and sociologically, to its special quality. By now it is unlikely that more than a handful of literate Americans have not either read one of his Jewish novels or been engaged in at least one passionate discussion about him with someone who has. I am referring particularly, of course, to *Exodus,* whose early sales were modest though steady and then somehow suddenly mushroomed beyond a publisher's wildest fantasies—and the power of whose effects, both on Jewish morale and on Israel's public relations, was witnessed by a staggeringly varied mass of readers.

In his review of *Exodus* in these pages (June 1959), Joel Blocker pointed out that the novel took its form directly from the movie it was meant to become. That is so, but somehow the observation does an injustice to the workings of Mr. Uris's genre. Movies, after all, have available to their manipulation the actual physical images of beautiful and glamorous people, movie stars. Mr. Uris's prose *writes* movie stars, which is no simple matter—especially in view of the postures these stars are given to assume. The muscles of every hero must threaten to rip through his clothing; adolescent heroines must awake to the stirring of strange new feelings within their budding breasts; Christian (possibly frigid) ladies must throw themselves at their brooding Jewish fighter-lovers; foreign correspondents and free-lance pilots must lose their hardened cynical hearts; etc. And all through a vast number of pages and carefully researched historical details.

Mila 18 is an account of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of 1943, and is at this writing third on the best-seller list. The book will certainly never achieve the colossal triumph of its predecessor—if for no other reason than that it *has* a predecessor. It is, however, undoubtedly consolidating Mr. Uris's position with the readers of *Exodus*: for it is the same book, covering slightly different ground—the Jewish heroism of *Exodus* carried retroactively, as it were, to the Warsaw Ghetto. The author intends, as he says in a foreword to the paperback edition of *Exodus,* ". . . [to write] about fighting people, people who do not apologize either for being born Jews or the right to live in human dignity." Left "where they rightfully belong, on the cutting-room floor" have been ". . . all those steeped in self-pity . . . all those golden riders of the psychoanalysis couch." Such an intention is foolproof. Who in this world would not happily accept an honest-to-God fighting man in trade for someone who rides couches?

This reviewer must confess that she sat down one evening not long ago with a copy of *Exodus*—after adamantly refusing to read it for two years—and did not move from the chair until morning and the last page. Not only is one, with a book like this, relieved of all the nagging, whining, doubting of most current literature, and provided instead with the refreshment of characters who think simply and act, act, act all the time; one is also on every page succumbing to an irresistible kind of titillation. For Mr. Uris's work is pornographic—not in the sense of being about, or arousing, sex, but in applying the kind of prurience usually associated with sex to the other human passions. Like the ladies'-magazine fiction from which it derives, it is a pornography of the feel-

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ings; and this, while perhaps not as universally affecting as true pornography, has much the same power to set off pure fantasies.

> Christopher de Monti held his head between his legs and began to vomit. He vomited until his guts screamed with pain. Page after page it went. The full report of Andrei Androfski, the reports of a handful of survivors of Treblinka and Chelmno and the labor camps.
>
> "God! What have I done?" he cried in anguish. "I am a Judas! I am a Judas!"
>
> The puke and the tears and the pain and the liquor crushed on him and he fell to the floor in a dead faint.

NEVERTHELESS THERE remains the riddle of why these books by themselves have seemed to accomplish what years of persuasion, arguments, appeals, and knowledge of the events themselves, have failed to do—why people have claimed to be converted to Zionism, uplifted, thrilled, enthralled by them. A standard answer, of course, is that novels make facts and ideas vivid. But to get involved in comparing the "vividness" of *Mila 18* with that of, say, a Swedish documentary film called *Mein Kampf* would bring us to subtle and technical questions of social psychology.

The real answer to the riddle lies in the unwitting revolution Mr. Uris has wrought: he has for the first time brought off genuine trash about Jews. I say "unwitting" because Mr. Uris writes as he writes; whatever the subject, his sensibility remains what it is. But for his readers, particularly his Jewish readers, he has created the possibility of seeing Jews not as the troublesome and incomprehensible heroes that decent social conscience has always demanded but as the kind of heroes that middle-class dream-life has conditioned us all to make our most immediate responses to. This is of course not to say that nothing bad has ever before been written about Jews under the Nazis or in Israel; in fact, almost nothing good (in a literary way) has. It is to say that nothing has been written about them before without the depressing demands of an inarticulate piety for Jewish experience in Europe; even novels about plushy Jewish life in America are shadowed by it somewhere. "Jewish fate" is always a hint to remind you that this is no easy or pleasurable matter—like the broken glass that is supposed to commemorate national destruction at every wedding. Plunging right into the heart of that Jewish fate at its most terrifying, Mr. Uris has nevertheless created a fantasy that all Americans can at the very least understand and at the most be considerably excited by. It is as if for years and years people who read about Jews had to keep one eye on the next world and now they have been paid off with something for this one.

THAT TRAGIC LAND

THE BURDEN OF SOUTHERN HISTORY. By C. VANN WOODWARD. *Louisiana State University Press. 205 pp. $3.50.*

THE CONFEDERACY. By CHARLES P. ROLAND. *University of Chicago Press. 218 pp. $3.95.*

Reviewed by SAMUEL SHAPIRO

C. VANN WOODWARD is a distinguished member of that group of Southern scholars who have in recent years attempted to destroy persistent and pernicious myths about their section's history. In his biography of Tom Watson (1938), Professor Woodward exposed the ugliness of racist politics; in *Origins of the New South* and *Reunion and Reaction* (1951) he showed that it was economic advantage and not a desire to "rescue" their fellow whites which motivated the Redeemers of 1877; and in *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955) he demonstrated that segregation was not an ancient Southern tradition but a result of conservative resistance to Populism in the late 1890's. As recently as last June, Mr. Woodward returned to his native Arkansas to assail another myth, the New South idea that industrialism will automatically solve the South's social problems. An industrialism based on unchanged social and political habits, he told his audience, "means caste and segregation and paternalism . . . juleps for the few and pellagra for the crew. It means a facade of greek columns and a backyard full of slums . . . a New South fraud papered over an Old South myth."

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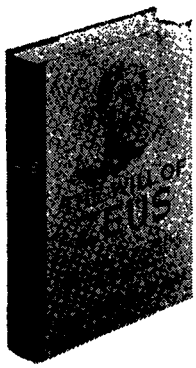

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ward once again searches for the true meaning of Southernism. He rejects the legends of the Cavalier and the Plantation as having been disproved by historical analysis. He rejects the idea that climate is a central factor on the ground that the South is changing rapidly while the climate remains the same. He rejects the nostalgic agrarianism of the authors of *I'll Take My Stand* as being outmoded by the Bulldozer Revolution, and he also rejects the genteel racism of U. B. Phillips ("the South shall be and remain a white man's country") as a position increasingly impossible to defend. Instead he finds the central theme of Southern history—the factor which still sets the section apart—in a knowledge of tragedy, "the experience of frustration, failure, and defeat" not shared by the rest of America.

The idea is an attractive one, and it is expounded throughout the book with a love of the South tempered by intelligence and detachment. Essays on John Brown, on the significance of Reconstruction, and on Populism as a heritage which we "cannot afford to repudiate" exemplify Mr. Woodward's determination to uncover the tragic meaning of these episodes without flattering the self-righteousness of either North or South. According to his thesis, the South can provide us with "a heritage and a dimension of historical experience that America very much needs, a heritage that is far more closely in line with the common lot of mankind than the national legends of opulence and success and innocence. . . . It is a heritage that should prove of enduring worth to [the Southerner] as well as to his country."

This sense of a special destiny, this affectionate fingering of old wounds, has a natural appeal to literate and liberal Southerners frustrated and sometimes driven from home by the Eastlands, Ellenders, Pattersons, and Jimmy Davises. And surely there must be something worth preserving in a society that for more than thirty years has produced many, if not most, of our very finest imaginative writers and historians. Moreover, as Professor Woodward points out, racism, self-glorification, and intolerance have generally been national, and not merely Southern, sins. The nation's current racial troubles spring from the fact that the North never insisted on and the South consequently never accepted the commitment to equality implied by the Emancipation Proclamation: "America reneged, shrugged off the obligation, and all but forgot it for nearly a century." (My own students, at a university thirty miles from the Canadian border, hotly denounce segregation without seeming to consider why there are no Negroes in their suburbs, schools, or public swimming places.)

THE TIME HAS COME, however, when the idea of the Southern sense of tragedy must give way before a few simple facts of Southern existence—facts that put someone like Professor Woodward into an extremely painful relation with his heritage. For in their battle against desegregation Southern politicians are repeating all the old errors of the 1850's and the 1890's, and Southern liberals have had to fall silent or go down to defeat or exile. To speak relevantly of tragedy and defeat in America today must be to speak of a different tragedy and defeat, one that continues to deform the life of every tenth American and every fourth Southerner.

Unlike Professor Woodward, the impoverished Southern white has reacted to his predicament, not with a heightened insight into human destiny, but with Negrophobia and anti-Semitism. And the South's much touted decline in political power since the seven decades when slaveowners dominated the government is after all only a relative one: a tight little oligarchy remains in control back home, with Sam Rayburn, Lyndon Johnson, and a score of committee chairmen in Congress wielding a rather more than fair share of Southern power in Washington.

The years that have passed since Professor Woodward's call for the South to accept the consequences of Appomattox and to "perform what is required of it with forbearance and humility" have made it increasingly clear that the South is not going to do any such thing. Less than one Negro in three is registered to vote in ten Southern states; in Alabama the figure is one in eight, and in Mississippi one in twenty. Seven years after the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education,* Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and South Carolina

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still have no desegregated schools; Louisiana has four Negro children in two desegregated New Orleans schools; and the remaining states of the old Confederacy have less than one Negro child in fifty attending classes with whites. The occasional flare-ups of violence, of snarling vituperation against the "Jew-backed NAACP," of police attacks upon Negroes with clubs and dogs, are only symptoms of a deeper malaise, a refusal to accept criticism and change that is ominously reminiscent of ante-bellum days.

Professor Woodward tells us that, "In 1897, the Charleston *News and Courier*, which calls itself the oldest paper in the South, voiced strong opposition to a proposed Jim Crow law for trains. 'Our opinion is that we have no more need for a Jim Crow system this year than we had last year, and a great deal less than we had twenty and thirty years ago.'" That same newspaper now prints front-page editorials in defense of segregation headlined "Who Cares What Asians Think?"

In the meanwhile, the state that has produced such able and deeply moral men as Professor Woodward, Harry Ashmore, and John W. Fulbright (the first two now living outside the state, and the Senator apparently headed for retirement in 1962) is largely being represented to America and the world by Orval J. Faubus.

PROFESSOR ROLAND, like Professor Woodward, is a liberal Southerner who is not blind to his section's faults. His history of the Confederacy, a volume in the Chicago History of American Civilization series, is free from the retrospective patriotism and denigration of the Negro that mark E. Merton Coulter's earlier book on the same subject. Mr. Roland gives sensible, conventional answers to such much-disputed questions as the reason for the South's defeat: "With all else equal the Confederacy lacked the physical assets for a successful war of independence." He handles military matters with commendable brevity, and manages, in 195 pages, to include excellent short discussions of Confederate finance, politics, diplomacy, religion, education, and even fiction, poetry, and music. His book can be recommended as the best available introduction to the subject with which it

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deals. His discussion of the death from wounds and disease of 250,000 Confederate soldiers, one out of every four men enrolled, and his account of "indescribable suffering" behind the lines are useful correctives to the habit of many Centennial celebrants of regarding the War as simply a vast and enjoyable kind of game.

UNIFYING THE SCIENCES

THE STRUCTURE OF SCIENCE. By ERNEST NAGEL. *Harcourt, Brace and World. 618 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by RAZIEL ABELSON

IN THE EARLY PART of this century, the leading American philosophers were visionaries. Peirce, James, Whitehead, and Dewey were intellectual adventurers whose charts of knowledge, while fuzzy and inaccurate in detail, revealed new territories and changed the proportions of the old. But American thought, like America's role in world affairs, seems to have outgrown its youthful idealism and to have settled down to the important but unexciting task of perfecting the status quo. Pragmatism, once a revolutionary call to arms against the tyranny of religious tradition over science, now functions as a method for defending the present state of science against proposals for radical change. Ernest Nagel, one of our most distinguished contemporary philosophers, exemplifies both the virtues and the defects of the present trend toward consolidation. The publication of his monumental work, *The Structure of Science,* is a major event in American philosophy because, in addition to its own intrinsic merit, the book sums up and shapes into a coherent pattern the achievements of American philosophy in the last three decades. He is one of the few contemporary writers in this age of technical specialization whose breadth of learning and sense of proportion qualify him to attempt the almost impossible task of constructing a coherent picture of the world out of the rapidly growing mass of scientific knowledge. The result is an impressively balanced consolidation of the contrasting insights of two rival traditions of scientific philosophy, logical positivism and pragmatism.

The early logical positivists, who considered mathematical physics to be the paradigm of scientific method, were obsessed with a vision of knowledge as a unified deductive system; in this respect they were the modern heirs of 17th-century mechanism. James and Dewey, on the other hand—guided by the more purely empirical procedures of psychology and sociology—regarded scientific theories as instruments whose validity is limited to the particular problem-solving contexts in which they are successfully employed. Professor Nagel, who is equally at home in natural and in social science, applies pragmatic criteria to theoretical issues in physics and biology, and applies rigorous positivistic standards of clarity and precision to the evaluation of our knowledge of man.

Merely to have effected such a consolidation is in itself a remarkable achievement. However, *The Structure of Science* suffers from a disparity between the brilliant clarity of the individual details and the somewhat blurry quality of their over-all composition. Physical science is taken to be the central source of knowledge, from which all other rational disciplines radiate; but this view blends into a pragmatic and pluralistic one of many different kinds of scientists at work, each hammering out his own concepts and techniques in response to his special problems. Nagel finds unity in the methods of the sciences and multiplicity in their subject matter, and the result of this contrast is that the relation between method and subject matter—which one would naturally assume to be an intimate one—becomes tenuous and strained.

For example, Nagel distinguishes four different senses of "explanation"—deductive, probabilistic, purposive, and genetic—and demonstrates how they function in different types of inquiry. He argues convincingly against the view that science merely describes sequences of phenomena, and that only theology and metaphysics can provide genuine explanations of them. But on the intra-scientific issue of whether only one of his four kinds of explanation is adequate, or whether each is adequate in its own way, his position is not perfectly clear. At times he expresses a strong preference for the deductive pattern of explanation exemplified by mathematical physics, and suggests that the other three kinds are merely incomplete

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forms of it; in fact, his technical ingenuity as a logician is most evident in his demonstrations of how purposive explanations in biology and probabilistic explanations in social science may be expressed as partial deductions. At other times, however, he suggests that probabilistic and purposive explanations are adequate alternative methods for dealing with problems that simply do not lend themselves to deductive theoretical treatment.

In any case, Nagel is by no means an old-fashioned mechanist: he explicitly denies that all branches of physics are reducible to mechanics, and that all other sciences are reducible to physics. On most specific issues in the philosophy of science—such as how closely a theory must match the actual structure of the phenomena it explains, whether real space is Euclidean or non-Euclidean, whether the elementary particles of nuclear physics have definite spatio-temporal location, and whether invariant laws of human behavior can be discovered by scientific inquiry—Nagel argues for non-intervention by philosophical legislators and maintains that working scientists must be free to decide these issues on pragmatic grounds. But, like many logical positivists, he seems to be himself a more sophisticated kind of mechanist who would like to see the logical structure of every science resemble that of classical mechanics. And it is apparent from his consistent search for deductive structures in biology, sociology, and history that only a keen awareness of the special complexities of each branch of science inhibits him from declaring a goal of every discipline to be the logical unification of its theories within the framework of a universal science.

Now this cautious mechanism, tempered by his sensitivity to the need of each science for some conceptual autonomy—however tense at times the relation between them—does work effectively in Nagel's account of the natural sciences. In his analysis of sociology and history (in the last third of the book), however, the fluctuation between a program of deductive reorganization of these disciplines and a pragmatic defense of their statistical and crudely empirical character is more problematic. Nagel's impressive replies to the stock arguments against any kind of behavioristic inquiry into human conduct are powerfully reasoned and, I believe, unanswerable. But his positive thesis, that the social sciences are capable of developing a theoretical structure comparable, in precision, logical clarity, and predictive power, to the natural sciences, seems to be far less plausible.

The key issue he considers is whether or not the social sciences are capable of developing the kind of neat deductive theories which, in the natural sciences, have enabled man to explain and predict events with ever-increasing reliability. Nagel recognizes the conspicuous absence of theoretical laws in social science, but he does not regard it as evidence of an essential difference between social and natural science. Yet he modifies this claim for social science with so many qualifications that it emerges as little more than a hope—and, finally, he limits himself to affirming that the evidence so far fails to prove the *logical* impossibility of theoretical knowledge of man that approaches our knowledge of the physical world.

Now it seems to me that Nagel vacillates between two views of social knowledge, each of which has great merits but only when the commitment to it is wholehearted. One, the mechanistic view, finds the trouble with the present state of social science, as Nagel frequently suggests, to be that its concepts are not defined in terms of measurable physical magnitudes. The other, the view of pragmatic pluralism, stresses "the essentially 'practical' nature of our current interests in social phenomena" and recognizes that the study of man is fundamentally unlike the study of nature, due to its practical orientation, the greater complexity of its subject matter, and the *necessarily* vague character of its concepts. Thus: ". . . there are some grounds for doubting that the social sciences are likely to refine their current distinctions beyond a certain point—a point fixed by the general character of the problems they investigate and the level of analysis appropriate for dealing with those problems."

Should social science, then, continue to pursue its gross statistical methods, occasionally enlivened by dashes of literary metaphor ("inner-directed," "charismatic personality," "conspicuous consumption," etc.), or should it construct deductive models whose

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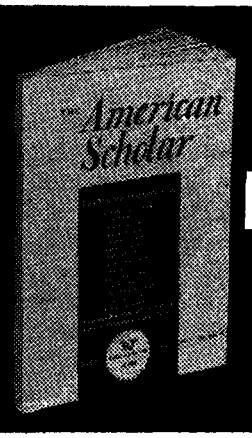
concepts are operationally defined in terms of precise measurements? This is the methodological translation of the classical metaphysical question: is man an integral part of nature, or does he to some extent stand outside of nature? Either answer, the monistic or the pluralistic one, would be visionary in both a bad and a good sense. But it would chart a clear direction for social inquiry. John Wisdom once wrote that philosophy is most interesting when it is wrong, by which I think he meant that the role of philosophy, unlike that of science, is to suggest rather than to prove. If so, then Nagel's scholarly caution reduces rather than augments his philosophical power.

The concluding chapter of *The Structure of Science* raises similar questions about the nature of historical inquiry. Nagel argues forcefully against writers like Isaiah Berlin, who deny that it is either possible or appropriate for historians to search for objective explanations of historical events. He agrees that there are no specific laws of history but concludes from this, not that history is not a science, but that it is an applied science which explains events in terms of laws derived from theoretical disciplines such as psychology and sociology. Even if one grants, as Nagel successfully demonstrates, that deductive explanations are not logically impossible in history, there still remains the more practical question: *ought* one to look for them? Nagel himself argues that it would be impractical to expect historians to satisfy the rigorous standards of natural scientific explanations, and that we must resign ourselves to the continued use of probabilistic and genetic patterns. But if the historian can get along quite well without deductive models and the physicist cannot, doesn't this suggest a very fundamental difference in subject matter and in the method appropriate to investigating it? If it is wrong to impose *a priori* forms on scientific inquiry, if the scientist must be free to deal with his problems by whatever conceptual means he finds effective, then what purpose can be served by demonstrating that his results could, in principle, be recast in a form appropriate to natural science—what purpose other than to suggest that, if we had sufficient knowledge, we would be able to



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unify all the branches of science within a single conceptual system patterned on classical physics?

My insistence on what seem to me to be discrepancies in Nagel's general picture of knowledge should not divert attention from the extraordinary scholarship, clarity, and logical insight that inform his detailed discussions of specific problems in each field of science. Nor can one do justice to his philosophical work without recognizing the depth and consistency of his commitment to scientific method. Nagel has devoted his career to demonstrating that in the sciences unsolved problems are evidence of vitality rather than impotence, and that the methods for solving these problems are perfectly continuous with the methods that expose them. In this fundamental purpose he has, I think, been eminently successful. His work, taken as a whole, provides an authoritative assessment and a spirited defense of scientific method against metaphysical substitutes for intellectual hard work.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

HAROLD ROSENBERG is a leading critic of modern literature and art. His essays have been collected in *The Tradition of the New* (Horizon).

MARVIN FOX, who teaches philosophy at Ohio State, writes frequently on Jewish theology.

WALTER SCHWARZ is an editor of the London journal *West Africa*. He contributed "Varieties of African Nationalism" to our July number.

MIDGE DECTER'S most recent appearance in COMMENTARY was a report "Women at Work" (March).

SAMUEL SHAPIRO, who teaches at Michigan State, is a specialist in Civil War history as well as in Latin American affairs.

RAZIEL ABELSON is an assistant professor of philosophy at New York University.

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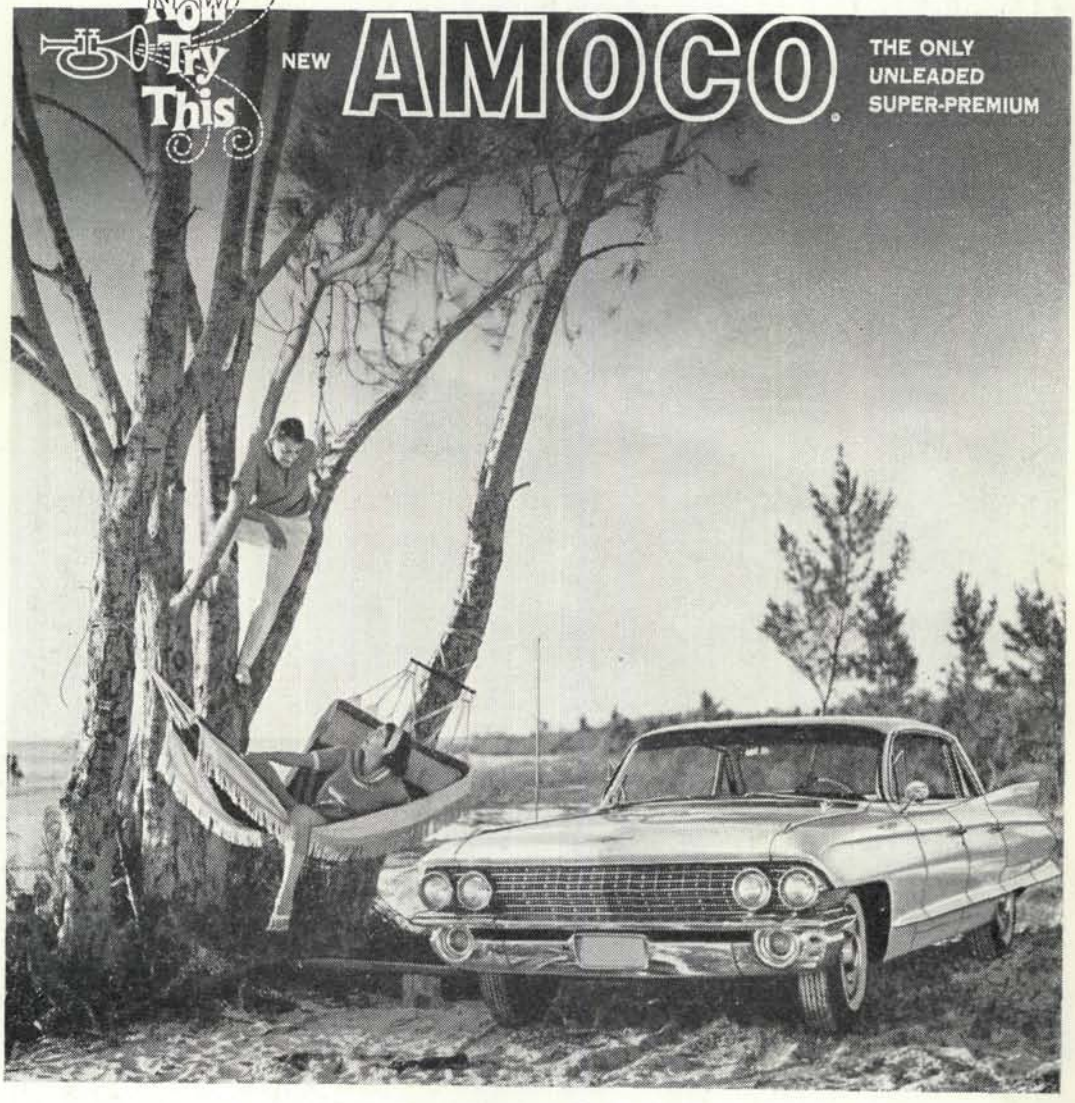

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